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G3 MAC
Inside Apple's Game -box

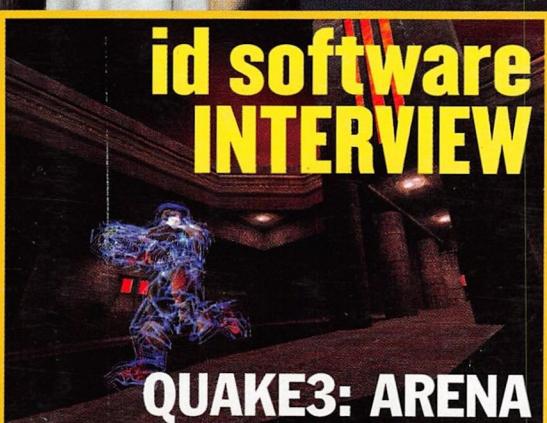
COOL IT!

High performance fans

LAN PARTY
LEGENDS

Deathmatch Diary

id software
INTERVIEW



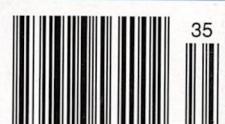
QUAKE3: ARENA



MAG
OF THE
YEAR

next
gaming

ISSUE 35
\$8.95



35

April 1999

NZ \$11.95 inc. GST



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AND UNLESS YOU REACH THE FINAL BATTLE, IT WILL STAY THAT WAY.



A rival family imposes peril on the future of your livelihood.

The evil Empire's presence is looming. Your only hope for survival is to join the Rebel Alliance in epic *Star Wars* conflicts. As full-scale galactic battles begin, you will be called upon to command Rebel starfighters, including X-wings and other new spacecraft. You and up to seven other Rebel players will clash with

Imperial fighters in spectacular 3D missions. Finally, if you're worthy, you will find yourself in the cockpit of the legendary *Millennium Falcon*, flying against the massive Imperial fleet in the climactic Battle of Endor. Ultimately, it will be your agility, resolve and combat skills in these maneuvers that will determine your destiny. Not to mention, the fate of the entire galaxy.



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Turn traditional thinking on its ear.

Today, regardless of the PC brand you choose, the most important component is not the computer. It's the monitor. Yesterday, the hot phrase was "Monitor Sold Separately." Today, it's "PC Sold Separately." Technology blurs the lines between one computer and another. They're all fast, all loaded, all pretty much the same.

What's different, what's exciting is happening in displays - multimedia monitors with built-in teleconferencing capabilities and monitors with short depth technology that will save you a lot of space.

ViewSonic PS775 is a real space saver with a footprint comparable to most 14" (various viewable) monitors. With spectacular specs like 0.25mm horizontal dot pitch, a resolution of 1280 x 1024 at 90 Hz flicker-free refresh rate and SuperClear™ screen technology, it provides high-contrast, strong, bright color images. With the USB hub base, it allows users to incorporate up to four additional USB compliant peripherals for multimedia.

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What we're playing:
Heroes of Might & Magic III, Alpha Centaurii, hard to get, Half-Life, Cool Boarders 3, Poy-Poy, Mortal Kombat 3, R-Type Delta, Street Fighter Zero 3

Games and Stuff



It's all going on. Top issue, this. Id Software's Paul Steed speaks his mind in our interview. Some of it made us cringe, other bits we laughed out loud to. Steed is a guy who has something to say - and some of it even covers the forthcoming Quake 3: Arena. Must read stuff.

Having his say too is our pet freak Spoonman. We have run technical articles before on what it takes to host a LAN party, but Spoonman's LAN party report tells the real story. The funny, sometimes tragic and severely depraved human side of an epic 4 day festival of gaming. It's a miracle he lived through it all. Mr Spoon also found the time to knock up a strategy guide for Starcraft: Brood Wars. You'll need it, for Brood Wars is one seriously tough game.

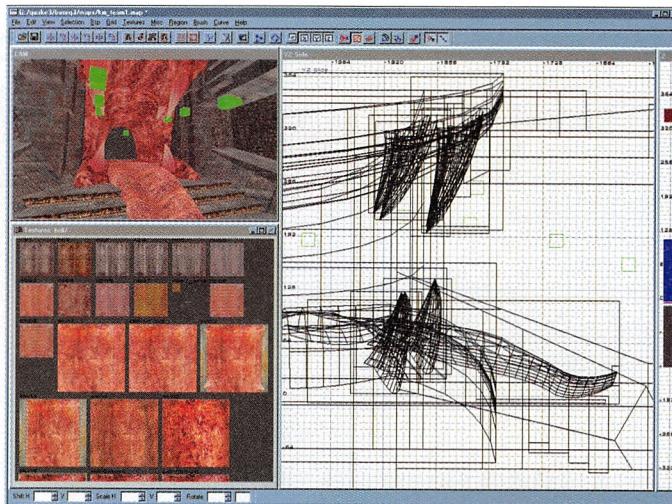
We could never be accused of ignoring Ultima Online - and there's been a ton of goings-on in this incredible online fantasy world. A fresh look at UO was needed and that's exactly what you get. Sure, Ultima Online hasn't turned out to be exactly what Origin promised, but instead it has evolved to become a fascinating virtual world where the best and worst in people are magnified to a huge degree.

Continuing our Falcon 4.0 series, the good Major scores an interview and digs deeper into this most remarkable piece of software - it's almost disrespectful to call it a game!

And it's all going on. In a week I'm off to Skywalker Ranch for a play of the new games LucasArts are preparing based on the new movie, then straight to Redmond to check out what's on the slab in the labs at Microsoft. With E3 just around the corner the game designers are working flat out polishing their new games, so be ready for a heavy dose of exclusive previews.

Games eh? Even when we're drowning in a flood of incredible games we still want more. More is what you'll get. More gaming goodness. Stay tuned.

Ben Mansill
Editor



Level design from id Software's upcoming Quake3: Arena (see p30 for interview)

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Nothing's bothering Ben this month, so he lames-out badly and just rattles on about the current issue...

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Become a true 'Elite' and join Clan PowerPlay. Win cool big stuff too.



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Idsoftware's Paul Steed

Steed just doesn't hold back in this rollercoaster of an interview.

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An in-depth examination of Apple's new toy. This article's sole purpose is to provide justification for all future PCPP Mac-slaggering.



Ultima Online

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Yep, that again. The truly amazing internet megaplayer game just keeps growing and getting weirder every day.

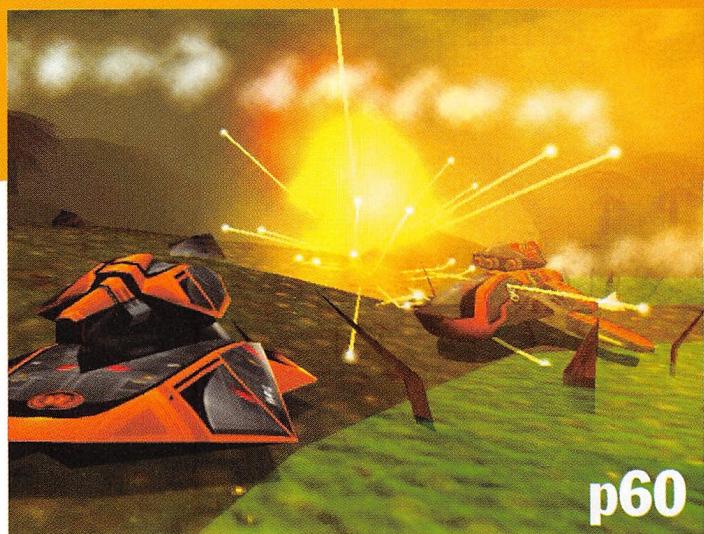
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The inspiring and often tragic tale of a 4 day LAN party that almost sucked the life out of its participants.



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GAMEPLAY

Heretic II Playguide

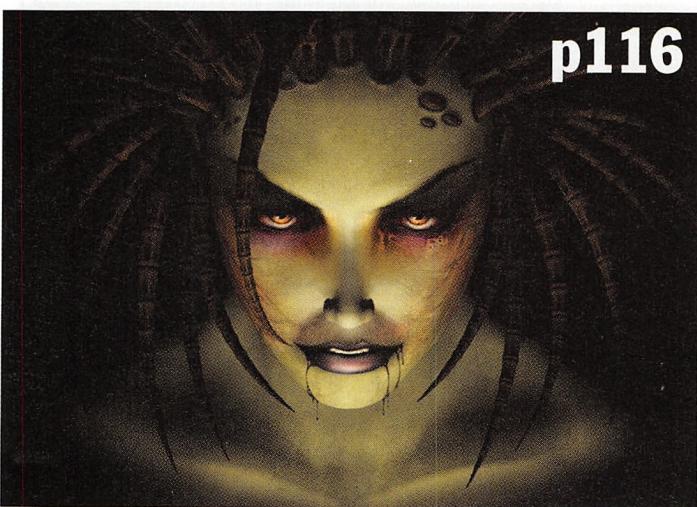
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This is no walkthrough. The journey of discovery is your to behold. Instead, just lots of very helpful info.

Starcraft: Brood Wars Playguide **116**

As above. Spoonman gives it to you like you want it.

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Oracle

He's just amazing. The guy that plays EVERYTHING is here to help you!

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F-19 Stealth Fighter sees the light of day again.



CD GUIDE

More than enough of the good stuff

CD #35

Starting the PC PowerPlay CD

Welcome to the PCPowerPlay double cover CD. We have included all the popular programs to make the most of your PC. Using the CD is easy. Simply insert the CD into your CDROM drive and it should automatically bring up the Menu interface. (If not, don't panic, just click on the RUNME.BAT file to manually install the program).

Once the menu is up, you can navigate the screens using your mouse. Click on the category of your choice (eg Education, Fun, Games, etc..) to begin. Have a look at the programs, and if you see something you like to try out, just click on it. Depending on your choice, the program will either install itself to the hard drive or run straight off the CD.

cdtech@powerplay.next.com.au

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CD 1

Games AFL 99

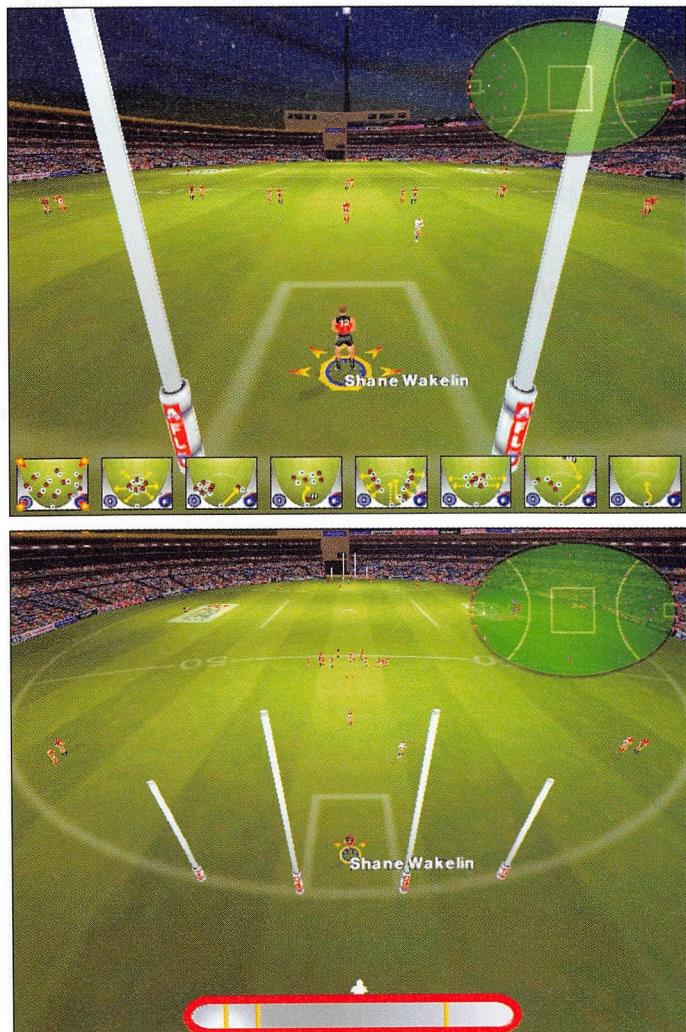
Publisher: EA Sports

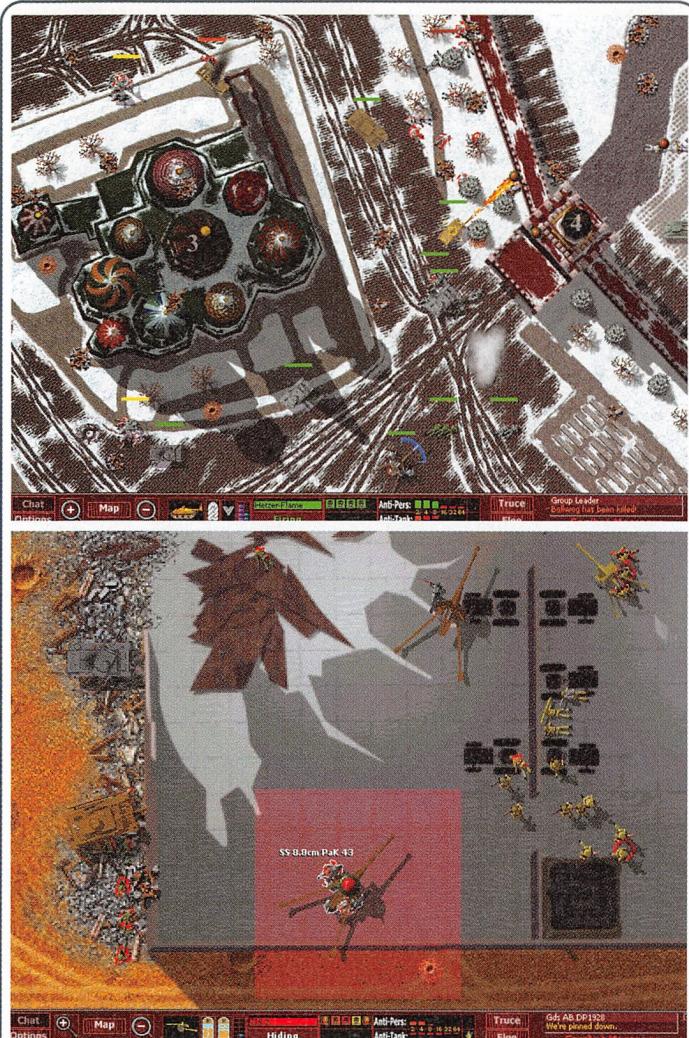
Genre: Sports

AFL 99 is the closest thing to playing in the pressure cooker environment of the AFL premiership. This is a limited demo of AFL 99. Two teams are available; The Adelaide Crows, playing at home, or The North Melbourne Kangaroos, playing away. There is only one Stadium available - The MCG - and you can only play at night. It also helps to have a fast PC.

Required: P2-333, 32MB, SVGA

Recommended: P2-333, 32MB, SVGA, 3D Card





CLOSE COMBAT 3

Publisher: Microsoft

Genre: Strategy

ANSWER A CALL TO ARMS! Command a fire brigade of soldiers on the Russian Front in this real-time strategy game set in World War II featuring unequalled detail, realism, and scope. Play as either the Soviets or Germans as you orchestrate your squads' attack, defense, and survival over four gruelling years of the grandest and bloodiest war the world has ever seen. To succeed, you must guide your men through the mortal dangers of war while physically and psychologically defeating your enemies. Your soldiers are counting on you. Don't let them down!

Required: P133, 32MB, SVGA

Recommended: P200, 32MB, SVGA 2MB



Dawn Of Aces

Publisher: IMagic Online

Genre: Flight Simulator

The sequel to the very popular War Birds and uses the same engine. The flight arenas carry a more historic feel. The terrain is based in France with both fronts and aerodromes on both sides. You the pilot will be only able to fly for the allies or the Central Powers and will only have the appropriate planes for each side.

Required: P100, 16MB, SVGA

Recommended: P200, 32MB, SVGA 2MB

Excessive Speed

Publisher: Iridon Interactive

Genre: Driving Sim

Never liked racing by the rules? Out-speeding, out-cornering or outwitting your competitors is not your idea of having fun? Time to get down and dirty. Do it the Excessive Speed way: shoot them, freeze them, blow them into pieces! Don't want to race against five other cars? Release your rockets into the crowd! You're here to win, and nothing can stop you, except perhaps your opponents.

Required: P90, 16MB, SVGA

Recommended: P166, 32MB

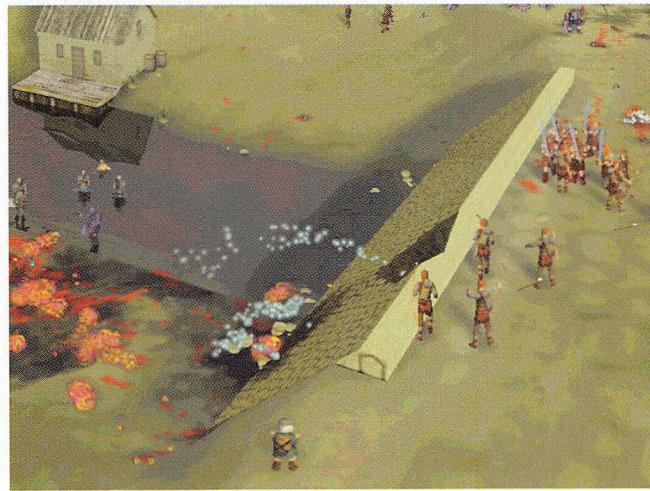
COMMANDOS Beyond the Call of Duty

Publisher: Eidos Interactive **Genre:** Strategy

The Dirty 1/2 Dozen are back in action. Lead the team into harms way in "Commandos: Beyond the Call of Duty". You are in command of Tiny, Spooky, Duke, Fins, Tread, and Inferno as they sneak into Eastern Europe, Greece, and Germany to finish the job they started. Armed with new weapons and devious decoys, the Commandos vow to fight until victory. However, the Germans have other plans for the boys. They have doubled their vigilance and strengthened their bases with Panzer and Luftwaffe reinforcements. Can you go behind the call of duty to finally win the war in Europe?

Required: P166, 16MB, SVGA 2MB

Recommended: P233, 32MB, SVGA 4MB



MYTH 2: Soulblighter

Publisher: Bungie

Genre: Strategy

Myth II: Soulblighter is a unique strategy game, set in a 3D world of dangerous alliances and ancient evil, where all beings tremble before the wrath of Soulblighter, cruellest and most cunning of the evil Fallen Lords. In Myth II destruction reigns supreme. Castle walls will crumble under a barrage of Dwarven mortar fire. Drawbridges will lower before your besieging army. Flaming arrows will rain down from battlements, lighting the ground beneath you. Dark wizards will hurl deadly sorceries at your ranks, scattering even your bravest warriors. Are you evil enough to play?

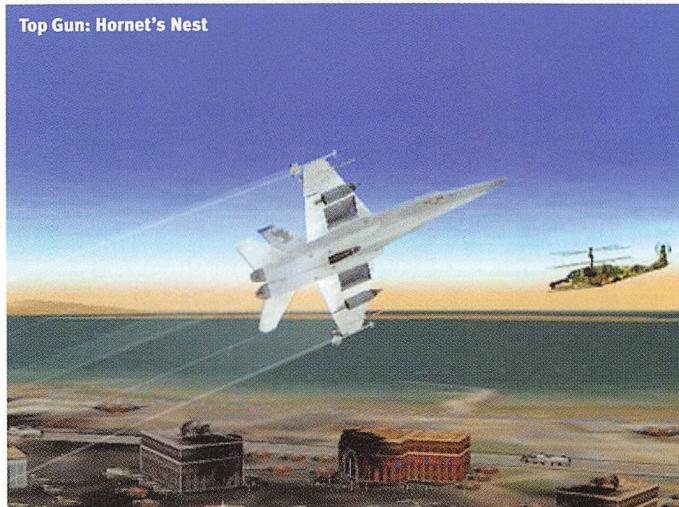
Required: P133, 32MB, SVGA

Recommended: P200, 64MB, 3D Card

Top Gun: Hornet's Nest



Top Gun: Hornet's Nest



Gruntz

Publisher: Monolith

Genre: Puzzle

It takes wits and wisdom to work your way through Monolith's new Puzzle-Powered brain game: Gruntz! Along the way, you'll experience side-splitting dialogue, rich hand-painted backgrounds, and the cutest, gooeyest creatures on the planet!

Required: P133, 32MB,

SVGA 2MB

Recommended: P166, 64MB,

SVGA 4MB

Hoyles Casino 99

Publisher: Sierra

Genre: Board Games

Take a walk through Hoyle's new 3D casino and take a chance on fun. Every table and machine you step up to is paying off with over 100 winning variations of your favourite games. Play against Hoyle's animated cast of characters, or head to the Internet to challenge players from around the globe. Either way, your can bet

that Hoyle gives you the most realistic casual no experience ever.
Required: 486DX2/66, 8MB, VGA
Recommended: P90, 16MB, SVGA

Top Gun : Hornets Nest

Publisher: Microprose
Genre: Flight Simulator
 You're Maverick, the Navy's top gun, in the cockpit of a screaming F/A-18 with the attitude and guts to take out any enemy foolish enough to take you on. You rule the sky in a fast-paced, action-flying battle-to-the-death game based on the classic motion picture. Just kick the tires, light the fires and go to full afterburner and clean 'em and fry 'em.
Required: P166, 16MB, SVGA
Recommended: P200, 32MB, SVGA 2MB



that the Imperium was fighting a two-front war: one against the rebellion at home and another against an alien race known as the Trich. Now, there's no one to stop the Trich from invading human space and devouring that sector of the galaxy.

In Uprising 2, players face mankind's worst nightmare, the Kri'isaaran Horde. The Horde must first be driven out of human space at the Nova Brunei colony and then pursued to the edge of the galaxy. Players may even get the chance to enter the Trich's home space to crush them where they live.

Required: P166, 32MB, SVGA 2MB

Recommended: P233, 64MB, 3D Card



Uprising 2: Lead and destroy

Publisher: 3Do
Genre: 3D Shooter
 Long live the New Alliance; the Imperium has been defeated. The Imperium of Man was overthrown at the end of the original Uprising, and you're now the main military force of the New Alliance. The main reason you won the first time around was



It's the most realistic football game you'll ever play off the pitch! All the skills and techniques of the real game are included - so with practice you'll be able to play like the man himself!

Required: P90, 16MB, SVGA

Recommended: P133, 32MB, 3D Card

World League Soccer 99

Publisher: Eidos Interactive
Genre: Soccer

Michael Owen's WLS '99 offers arcade quality graphics, with fast competitive, challenging gameplay.

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 for fastest low lag play

Applications &

Graphics

3D Magic

3D Magic is the coolest way to create stunning 3D logos and graphics for your web site or documents.

Acdsee

One of the fastest and easiest to use image viewer. It is very fast at decoding pictures and supports all type of graphic image formats including: BMP, GIF, JPEG, PCX, Photo-CD, PNG, TGA and TIFF.

Adobe Photoshop 5

Create, retouch, and enhance images - then prepare them for publication in any medium with Adobe Photoshop, the de facto standard photo design and production tool for Windows.

Animagic Gif

Animagic GIF is a simple yet powerful GIF animation tool. It produces output files that are 10% to 60% smaller than non-optimized GIF's and builds animations from individual frames or from existing animated GIF's.

CompuPic

CompuPic's sophisticated features, unparalleled image display quality and speed offer the power to satisfy the experienced graphics enthusiast, while its intuitive Windows-based user interface makes it easy to use for the beginner.

Cool 3D 2

COOL 3D is a great 3D titling program that brings the power and excitement of 3D right to your desktop. With COOL 3D you can now quickly and easily add great-looking 3D text to your web pages, documents, presentations, videos and multimedia titles.

Firehand Ember

Ember allows you to manage your image files visually. At last you can view whole directories at once containing any number of Windows bitmaps, progressive and standard JPEGs, GIFs and TIFFs.

Flash

Flash is the standard for interactive vector graphics and anima-

tion for the web. Web designers use Flash to create beautiful, resizable, and extremely compact navigation interfaces, technical illustrations, long-form animations, and other dazzling effects for their site. Graphics and animation will anti-alias and scale based on the viewer's screen size, providing high-quality viewing.

Gif Animator

Ulead GIF Animator 3 is the easiest, fastest, most flexible, and most powerful way to create animations for the Web. GIF Animator's ability to create compact animations with drag and drop simplicity has made it the industry standard for GIF animation.

Live Art 98

LiveArt combines advanced real-time 3D with custom artistic rendering to help you easily and quickly create illustrations that are unique to you. Graphics can be exported for use in desktop publishing, presentations, and the Web.

Paintshop Pro 5.01

One of the best programs available if you're interested in editing images. Almost as good as PhotoShop but much cheaper.

Thumbs Plus

ThumbsPlus is a graphic file viewer, locator and organizer that simplifies the process of finding and maintaining graphics, clip-art files, fonts and animations. It displays an image (thumbnail view) of each file. You can use ThumbsPlus to browse, view, edit, crop, launch external editors, and copy images to the clipboard.

Webgraphics Optimizer

WebGraphics Optimizer is perfect in making your images Web ready: Compress your images to save Web space and speed up your Web site with almost no visible image quality loss. You can compare the original image along with up to 5 different variations to find out the best quality and compression level.

Internet

Bullet Proof FTP

With Bullet Proof FTP, interrupted file transfers are easy to resume. Should you encounter a disconnection when downloading files, Bullet Proof FTP will automatically reconnect and resume downloading.

ByteCatcher Pro

ByteCatcher Pro offers a safe and reliable way to transfer files over the Internet. It is really three programs in one. Users can switch between two different FTP programs without losing any connections, and all the FTP features are available in a choice of two simple interfaces.

CU-SeeMe

CU-SeeMe is award-winning desktop videoconferencing software that provides person-to-person conferencing, group conferencing, and live broadcasting using TCP/IP over POTS, ISDN, LAN, and the Internet. With CU-SeeMe, you can make new friends, expand your social networks, find people with similar interests, watch entertaining cybercast events, and more.

CuteFTP

CuteFTP is a file transfer application that's easy for beginners to use and has enough features to be useful to power users as well. It uses drag and drop, bookmarks, automatic renaming, and download resuming to make FTP easier, and it features a macro that you can use to record frequent tasks and play them back later with another file.

Dreamweaver 2

Macromedia Dreamweaver offers you the productivity of a visual Web page layout tool, the control of an HTML text editor, and support for Dynamic HTML all in one professional package.

Email Ferret

EmailFerret is the fastest way to find email addresses on the Internet. Find the email addresses of people by simply entering a name (or partial name), and clicking "Find Now". Watch as it finds results almost immediately.

Eudora Light

Eudora Light is a cutting-edge email client that is loaded with features - and best of all it's free. Highlights include a powerful find feature, message filtering, and drag-and-drop text editing.

Eudora Pro

Eudora Pro Email is a robust email client whose features include the ability to filter, redirect, and forward mail, as well as multiple address book formatting options.

Free Agent

Free Agent is a free newsreader that carries a nice feature set including a built-in e-mail client, sort groups, sort messages, read next/previous message, watch thread, ignore thread, auto-dial, message caching, configurable multi-pane windows, auto-hangup, keep connection alive, decode attachments, and more. Easy to install and even easier to use.

Get Right

GetRight gracefully recovers from the many errors that can occur while you're downloading files. No matter how you lose your connection, GetRight can resume downloading a file. It can dial your telephone, download a file, hang up, and even shut down your computer automatically.

Gravity Newsreader

Gravity is a 32-bit newsreader that allows you to view material from and contribute articles in the form of text and graphics to more than 15,000 newsgroups worldwide. Gravity provides excellent multitasking capabilities for searching, sorting, and completing most newsreading tasks in the background.

Hot Metal Pro

Hot Metal Pro 5.0 is a powerful HTML authoring and publishing tool that is ideal for both professionals and people new to Website development. It has everything you need to easily develop sophisticated Websites.

ICQ

ICQ ("I seek you") is a popular messaging program that lets you

Utilities

communicate with friends and colleagues in real time. You can seek out friends on the ICQ network by entering their ICQ number or their name, nickname, or email address. Once your contact list is set up, you will be notified when your friends are online so that you can chat, send instant messages and files, play games, or just hang out.

Internet Phone

Internet Phone offers a full suite of multimedia features. You can now have unlimited long distance phone conversations for the cost of an Internet connection—as well as leave voice mail, make direct calls, exchange files, and create, edit, and view documents in real time with others around the world.

MS Internet Explorer 4.01

The latest release of Microsoft's Web browser. IE 4.01's support for key Internet standards, such as Dynamic HTML, Java, and the Channel Definition Format (CDF), means you can watch videos, listen to real-time broadcasts, and play games on the Internet through your browser.

mIRC

This highly configurable IRC client features a clean and intuitive user interface, an events handler, and full send and receive capabilities for DCC (direct client connection) files. The program offers coloured text lines, aliases, remote commands, and support for sound. It even includes an option to load your own backgrounds for virtually all windows available in mIRC.

Netscape 4.5

Communicator 4.5 is the latest release of Netscape's Internet software suite. It has features such as Smart Browsing; a three-paned, integrated Mail and News interface; pinpoint addressing; and a scalable address book. Highly regarded as one of the best browsers around.

NetMedic

Net.Medic is an Internet utility that works with your Internet browser to monitor, isolate, diagnose, and correct problems that affect your Internet experience.

Now you can identify the source of your network bottleneck, whether it is your PC, modem, Internet service provider.

Offline Explorer

Offline Explorer allows you to download up to 100 Web sites simultaneously for later offline viewing, editing, or browsing. You can schedule your downloads for a specific time and/or date, view your downloaded Web sites using your external browser or the program's internal one, and easily import any of your IE favourites or Netscape bookmarks.

Opera

Opera is a user-friendly, versatile, and fast Internet/intranet browser that also includes a newsreader. The keyboard plays a more integral role in surfing with this browser, which can make moving around the Web easy and fast. You can run multiple windows, even at start-up, and special features are included for users with disabilities.

Pagoo

Pagoo provides a fast and easy way to communicate with your friends when you are surfing the Net. This service delivers phone calls to your desktop while you are online. If it seems impossible for your friends to contact you because your phone line is always busy, Pagoo provides the solution. Now friends can call the Pagoo center using any phone and leave a message that you will receive directly on your desktop a few seconds later.

Shockwave 7

Streaming Shockwave delivers rich, dynamic, and fully interactive animation, audio, and multimedia to you with little or no waiting. Thousands of Web sites provide games, simulations, highly dynamic user interfaces, streaming audio, and multimedia productions.

TurboSite Accelerator

TurboSite is an applet that you add to pages on your Web site. This applet will cause a visitor's browser to pre-cache pages from your site. The pages to be pre-cached are determined by you.

Virtual Page

Virtual Page makes it easy to develop Web pages and see exactly what they look like while you are creating them. You can dynamically resize tables, frames and images, and even run Java applets and view QuickTime movies from inside Visual Page.

Web Ferret

Find web pages by simply entering a keyword, and clicking "Find Now". Finds results almost immediately. Searches can be narrowed by choosing to match any keyword, match all keywords or by submitting the keywords as an exact phrase. Clicking on the match will load the web page into your default web-browser.

WinTel

WinTel is a dial-up, Telnet, and FTP client package. This program emulates VT320, VT220, VT102, VT100, and ANSI terminals, and has Zmodem and Kermit as a file transfer protocol.

Sounds

Cakewalk Professional

Cakewalk Professional 8 is a powerful MIDI and digital audio software application that allows you to produce music and sound projects quickly and affordably.

Cool Edit Pro

Cool Edit Pro is the digital audio software package you've been waiting for. It's a breeze to learn and use, packs enough top-quality digital effects modules to fill a room full of rack mounts, and can mix up to 64 tracks together, using just about any sound card.

GoldWave

GoldWave is a digital audio editor for Microsoft Windows. It features realtime amplitude/spectrum oscilloscopes, intelligent large file editing, numerous effects, and support for a wide variety of sound formats.

Rebirth RB-338

ReBirth RB-338 2.0.1 is a software package that combines the classic sounds of two analog bassline synthesizers and two drum machines.

Sound Forge 4.5

Sound Forge 4.5, is recognized as an industry standard for audio editing on the Windows platform. As Sonic Foundry's most comprehensive digital audio editor, it contains a wide range of audio processes, tools and effects for manipulating audio.

SuperCD

A small compact CD player that allows for continuous play of your CD's. SuperCD Player will reside in your System Tray when run. Click on the icon to start or stop playing. Double clicking it will skip to the next track.

Winamp

Winamp is a high-quality MPEG audio player that plays all MPEG Layer 2 and Layer 3 audio streams and combines extensive functionality with an intuitive interface. Winamp has a full-featured playlist editor and a ten-band graphical equalizer with user-definable presets that can automatically load for specific files. One of the best sound files for MP3 with plenty of cool addons and effects.

Utils

3D Mark 99

3D Mark 99 is a benchmark program that focuses on testing the 3D performance of 3D accelerators in a "real-world" environment.

AllClear 2000 Pro

AllClear 2000 Pro is a comprehensive, industrial-strength program to check for year 2000 compliance in PC hardware. It complies with proposed standards, uses benchmark practices, and stores tests for more than 100 computers. This program can sense "auto-correcting" BIOS's and has extra flexibility built into the cold rollover dates.

Cacheman

When your system runs out of RAM, Windows starts to use virtual memory instead of flushing the disk caches. To change this, you have to edit the system.ini file. Cacheman is a GUI-based tool used to optimize the cache settings and change the afore-

Apps & Utils

mentioned INI file. The result is much better system performance on most systems due to the reduced use of the swap file.

Cleansweep

Quarterdeck CleanSweep can save you megabytes of disk space by allowing you to remove duplicate files, unused or unwanted programs, and system components from your Windows system. CleanSweep operates quickly, easily, thoroughly, and above all safely.

Customiser 98

Customizer '98 is an application that you can use to configure the Windows 95/98 and Microsoft Internet Explorer 4 hidden settings, many of them very powerful.

Fine Print

While maintaining document integrity and clarity, FinePrint decreases paper usage by printing one, two, four, or eight pages onto a single sheet. It allows you to not only save significant amounts of paper and toner but also extend printer life.

Ghost

Norton's Ghost creates an exact image of a PC's hard drive, effectively taking a "snapshot" of all the files—hidden, visible, and active—that make up the operating system, applications, and configuration settings. The image can then be copied to any number of PCs, creating completely identical installations.

Macro Magic

Macro Magic introduces several ways to save time by eliminating repetitive actions and simplifying complex tasks into one step. With Macro Magic you can assign repetitive tasks to a single keystroke.

MemTurbo

MemTurbo is a program that increases available RAM on your system. It also defragments your physical RAM, making your CPU and motherboard more efficient, without modifying your virtual memory. It recovers memory leaks from applications and flushes unused libraries and DLLs temporarily out to disk, making more room for your favourite games or applications.

Microangelo 98

Microangelo 98 is a suite of utilities for working with the icons, cursors, and animated cursors used by the latest Windows operating systems.

Net Zip Deluxe

NetZIP Deluxe 6.5 is a suite of three integrated components that seamlessly manage downloads and ZIP files. NetZIP Web, an Internet browser plug-in, automatically activates and begins a download when a user clicks a ZIP or EXE file.

Nortons Anti Virus

Norton Anti Virus 5.0 has new features that let you quarantine infected files and get help directly from Symantec researchers. Also, it automatically protects you against viruses and malicious ActiveX and Java applets. Norton AntiVirus can run constantly in the background to keep your computer safe from viruses that might come in from email attachments, Internet downloads, floppy diskettes, software CDs, or a network.

Nuts And Bolts

Nuts & Bolts is an integrated suite of utilities for Windows 95/98. It incorporates popular tools and utilities in a single package, allowing users to gain system information, optimize their system, maximize its performance, monitor and analyze system and software behavior, prevent crashes, and recover from disasters.

Powerdesk Utilities 98

PowerDesk Utilities 98 is a Windows file manager with a wide-ranging set of utilities that adds a quantum measure of functionality and ease to Windows 95, 98, and NT. The program features a powerful file manager that overcomes the deficiencies of Windows Explorer; built-in zip and unzip capabilities; and built-in file viewers to preview files instantly without the need to launch a separate utility.

Reg Repair 2000

RegRepair 2000 will fix IOS (Initiating Operating System) errors. These errors are the ones

you encounter during boot-up, the failure to load files in the boot log, and the corrupted font files that lock you out of Windows. The program is easy to use, prompting you every step of the way and informing you of what it is doing and why the file is corrupted in the first place. It will even clean and compact your Registry.

SANDRA

SANDRA (System Analyzer Diagnostic and Reporting Assistant) is a set of system diagnostic and benchmarking tools designed to help you keep your computer running at peak performance. It provides diagnostic, benchmarking, and performance tune-ups for more than 48 different hardware devices and subsystems, including CPUs, modems, BIOS, drives, graphic cards, and DOS and Windows memory.

ToggleMouse

ToggleMouse includes a suite of productivity tools packaged as one easy-to-use application. Tightly integrated with Windows 95 and NT, ToggleMouse is specially designed to make your day at the computer productive and stress-free.

Turbo Browser 98

Turbo Browser 98 is a file-management utility. With it, you can view, convert, print, compress, encrypt, copy, move, paste, delete, and batch-process files. With the program's integrated viewer, you can preview HTML documents, spreadsheets, images, multimedia files, ZIP files, and email messages.

UnInstaller Deluxe

Your PC continually accumulates junk files that can slow it down and cause problems. UnInstaller Deluxe makes it safe and simple to clean your PC by uninstalling applications—even those that Windows can't. It identifies duplicates, and it will move applications to another folder, drive, or computer, with all links intact.

Windows Adrenalin

Accelerate your hard disk, launch programs faster, and multitask faster with

Windrenalin. Its "SuperFassst" technology is designed to accelerate your hard drive. Use it to speed up file system operations on high-end Pentium and Pentium Pro systems.

Windows Commander

Windows Commander is a file manager replacement for Windows. It supports ZIP/ARJ/LHA/RAR/UC2/TAR/GZ/CAB/ACE, enhanced search, quick view, drag and drop explorer/desktop. has a built-in FTP client and more.

Win Config

WinConfig allows you to configure your boot-up process, clean up your Add/Remove Programs applet, change the start-up and shutdown logos, update system folder locations, refresh network "autologin," change the Start menu order, and more. WinConfig implements friendly wizards, each with full explanations.

Winfax

Why waste valuable time feeding paper to a fax machine? With WinFax Pro, you can fax documents right from your computer. You'll save time and money every time you fax.

WinTune98

WinTune 98 offers standard diagnostics, yet also tells you how to fix what ails your system. It tests your system, CPU, video components, disk drives, and memory. After testing with WinTune 98, you can compare your results with an extensive database of results posted by other WinTune users. If WinTune finds anything amiss about your system configuration or results, it will also give you tips to help fix the problem.

WinZip 7

WinZip is a zipping and unzipping utility that includes built-in support for popular Internet file formats such as TAR, ZIP, UUencode, XXencode, BinHex, MIME, and Unix-compressed files. ARJ, LZH, and ARC files are supported via external programs.

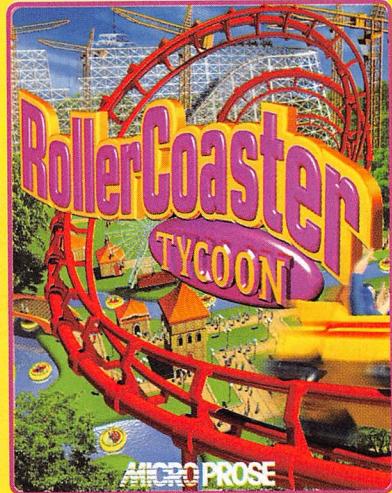
I can't believe it, I researched for months to get the ultimate Corkscrew. On the first ride, 2 people died of shock, and the other 32 threw up their hamburgers!

In that case, you'll have to lower the price, rename the ride and do a recruitment drive for more cleaners.



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CD2

Games, games, games. You asked for bigger demos, so we delivered. All the biggest, baddest demos we could possibly cram onto one CD.

Alpha Centauri

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Genre: Strategy

Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri is a turn-based game, you are the leader of a faction that has just crash-landed on the surface of Alpha Centauri; you must now explore the area around you, discover how to survive and expand on the alien world, build up an empire, and conquer rival factions who seek to undermine your goals.

This fully-playable demo captures the early excitement of the game by providing a limited 100-turn single player game. The demo allows you to select one of the 7 unique factions to control, each with its own agenda, strengths and weaknesses. As the demo begins, you will construct your headquarters base and begin mankind's next great endeavour on the fascinating new world of Alpha Centauri. See how high you can score in the first 100 years. Although the demo places certain limits to your faction's potential to grow into an advanced empire, you will still find plenty to explore, discover, build and conquer.

Required: P133, 16MB, SVGA
Recommended: P200, 32MB, SVGA 2MB

Carnivores

Publisher: WizardWorks
Genre: First Person Shooter

2190 AD. On a routine exploration mission, science vessel FMM UV discovered a planet with a suitable climate for humankind. During the initial scouting expedition this young planet, code-named FMM UV-32, was declared inhospitable for colony life due to its unstable terrain and immense population of prehistoric reptiles. News of this amazing planet spread and articles on the "Dinosaur Planet" lead an earth corporation to purchase the rights to the planet, and create DinoHunt Corp. DinoHunt created the unique opportunity for paying customers to become dinosaur hunters for the first time in 50 million years. You are the newest client of DinoHunt Corp.

Required: P150, 16MB, SVGA
Recommended: P233, 32MB, 3D Card

Dead Reckoning

Publisher: Piranha Interactive
Genre: 3D Shooter

What do you do when you've been abducted from Earth by a sadistic Master Race? Fight for your life in the game they've arranged for their amusement. Losing isn't an option - the fate of Earth hangs in the balance. Facing you in battle is a host of repulsive and violent aliens who are just as angry as you are about being thrown into the fight of their lives.

Required: P166, 16MB, SVGA
Recommended: P233, 32MB, 3D Card

Descent 3

Publisher: Interplay

Genre: 3D Shooter

The vertigo continues as the highly anticipated sequel to Descent I and II takes the mind-bending, pulse-pounding experience to another level! This time around, you will experience not only the same frenzied, subterranean shooting action, but also the thrill of flying out of the mines into the planetary atmosphere; where you can soar above the surface of the planet, engage in combat with enemy air and ground forces and use 10 new, lethal weapons to obliterate the most sophisticated robots to date!

Required: P200, 32MB, 3D Card

Recommended: P266, 64MB, 3D Card

ing through the air, the other flying into a cauldron of evil, and the entire kingdom's power crystals bouncing away like rubber balls. Your challenge - restore the kingdom by returning the gloves and crystals. Guide the good glove and balls through the different worlds. You can use magical spells to beat enemies and crush level bosses. Throw the balls to hit switches, or dribble them up stairs. Encounter bizarre and humorous characters as you solve puzzles and advance from level to level. Have a ball with Glover.

Required: P133, 16MB, SVGA

Recommended: P200, 32MB, SVGA 2NB

H.E.D.Z

Publisher: Hasbro Interactive

Genre: Adventure

When the game begins, the player chooses five Heads to progress through the first of 20 Levels (scattered across 4 Asteroids). All the Heads come with unique weapons and fighting abilities. And that's when the fun really begins! As you



HEROES of Might & Magic 3

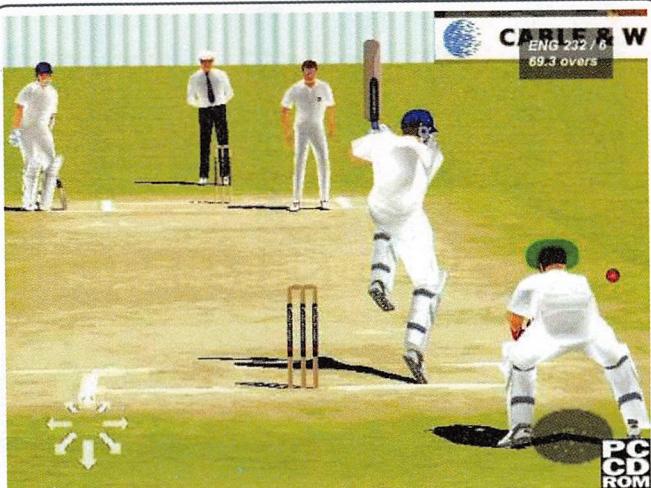
Publisher: 3DO

Genre: Preview

In Heroes 3 you control the actions of heroes that must complete mission objectives in a variety of conflicts taking place in the mythical land of Erathia. This non-playable demo gives you an insight of what to expect when the game is released later this year.

Required: P166, 16MB, SVGA

Recommended: P200, 32MB, SVGA



SHANE WARNE CRICKET

Publisher: Codemasters

Genre: Cricket

This demo pitches you into the pressure situation of the last 3 overs of an International 1 day match between South Africa and Australia at Cape Town. South Africa scored 7 / 246 off their 50 overs and Australia are up against it at 7 / 218 with 3 overs left. You must take control of the Australian batsmen and try to achieve the target.

Keyboard 1

NUMERIC KEYPAD KEYS

- 1 - Cover Drive
- 2 - Straight drive
- 3 - On Drive: frontfoot / backfoot
- 4 - Square drive
- 5 - Leg glance
- 6 - Square Cut / Late Cut
- 7 - Defensive: forward defensive / backfoot defensive
- 8 - Sweep / Pull / Hook

Enter - Normal Shot / Start run

R Ctrl - Six-hit shot / Turn around mid-run

R Shift - Defensive shortcut (no need to hold directional key)

o Ins - Leave ball / duck (no need to hold directional key)

SPACE - Menu

If you want to play TEAMPLAY then use the second keyboard as well...

Keyboard 2

Z - Cover Drive

X - Straight drive

C - On Drive: frontfoot / backfoot

A - Square drive

D - Leg glance

Q - Square Cut / Late Cut

W - Defensive: forward defensive / backfoot defensive

E - Sweep / Pull / Hook

TAB - Normal Shot / Start run

LShift - Six-hit shot / Turn around mid-run

L CTRL - Defensive shortcut (no need to hold directional key)

ALT - Leave ball / duck (no need to hold directional key)

- - Menu

Hold directional key and hit the Fire Button (Key) when you feel the time is right to play the shot. Timing is crucial for the success of each shot. To run, push RETURN to start running. If you decide against the run push R CTRL. You can pre-order another run by pushing the key just after they have crossed. Then, when the batsmen reach the crease they will turn and start the next the run.

Required: P166, 16MB, 3D Card

Recommended: P200, 32MB, 3D Card

power through the H.E.D.Z. tournament, you have the opportunity to collect new Heads. You collect new HEDZ by shooting another hedhunter until his head pops off and becomes a dead head token! Once you've grabbed the dead head token, and added it to your collection in the "Head Case," you get that newly-acquired heads special weapons and powers!

Required: P133, 16MB, SVGA

Recommended: P200, 32MB, SVGA 2NB



Links LS 99

Publisher: Access Software

Genre: Golf

Access Software brings the cradle of golf to your computer screen with its latest version of Links LS. The 1999 Edition of the world's most award-winning golf simulation features historic St Andrews Links - Old Course and over twenty-five new features. New tournament environment brings the crowds to watch you play! Real-time voice and spectator mode improve internet play. Features Arnold Palmer at Bay Hill Club and Lodge, Latrobe Country Club in brilliant fall colors and the stunning red cliffs of Entrada at Snow Canyon!

The LS 99 demo includes 9 holes from Entrada at Snow Canyon. Due to size limitations, multimedia tours are not available in the demo. A minimal set of sounds and golfer animations is also included.

Required: P150, 32MB, SVGA

Recommended: P166, 32MB, SVGA 4MB

Resident Evil 2

Publisher: Capcom

Genre: Adventure

The resident Evil phenomena continues to spread, inviting you into an immense environment, with incredibly detailed 3-D graphics and the most intense gameplay ever. Resident evil 2 introduces a vast selection of weapons, more mutant beasts and intricate sub-plots, which weave together in the worlds most terrifying adventure. The worst possible nightmare has been realized as the virus runs rampant. Raccoon City is infested with the flesh eating undead and only you are left to uncover the mystery...if you can survive!

Warning: Contains graphic Violence.

Required: P166, 16MB, SVGA

Recommended: P233, 32MB, 3D Card

NBA Live 99

Publisher: EA Sports

Genre: Basketball

EA SPORTS proudly introduces NBA Live 99. New player facial animations, chatter, and celebrations after big plays bring NBA players to life. Choose from a variety of modes and styles to set up a game with the ultimate NBA realism, or pick up and play with Arcade mode for faster setup, fewer rules, and more Monster Dunks.

Required: P166, 16MB, SVGA

Recommended: P200, 64MB, SVGA

TOCA 2: Touring Cars

Publisher: Codemasters

Genre: Driving

The demo allows you to play a 3 lap single race at Croft with either the Honda or Formula Ford. There is a 5 minute time out after the lights go green, then you will have to try again. All sound/graphics/physics/controller options are completely configurable within the demo, and yes FF steering wheels are supported. The replays can be saved and viewed from the front end main menu.

Required: P166, 16MB, SVGA

Recommended: P233, 32MB, 3D Card

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T Eaton, Meadows SA
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SIDELINES

There's another version of the Microsoft's DirectX API doing the rounds, this particular one being version 6.1. Included in this release is DirectMusic, which gives developers greater control on the sound and music in titles. DirectX 6.1 allows developers to manage MIDI playback, customize instruments, and feature interactive music. Also featured in this latest release is improved code to make use of the Pentium III's 3D graphics processing abilities. There's no need to rush out and download this latest version just yet though - games utilising this version of DirectX won't be hitting the shelves for a few months yet.

A "hole" or bug in most Web-based email providers has been discovered, which allows users to create an email message that can be falsely traced to a victim's email address and computer. Clearly a mass security risk, most good Web-based email providers are currently working on a patch to fix the loophole.

The Web is a fantastic place for juicy rumours to sprout and spread like wildfire. One of the most recent ones that has whipped fans into a frenzy has been the status of a third title in Blizzard's Warcraft series. Blizzard, being the good sports that they are, obliged these rumours with an official statement on Warcraft 3. "Blizzard has made no announcement regarding a third title in the series. We fully realise the potential for a follow-on to Warcraft II, and are eager to expand the Warcraft universe due to the enormous popularity and success of the series." Yep, quashing the rumours while also leaving the future open to possibility. So it's not all bad news, eh?

Sin. In a word, disappointing. The hefty V1.01 patch went some way towards fixing things, but there's still plenty of work to be done. Ritual are busy beavering away at version 1.02, which should be just about ready for release. It should quash many of the major remaining bugs, and add support for AMD 3Dnow! and Creative's EAX. The first mission pack for Sin, titled Wages Of Sin, is also on track. Developers 2015 are fully aware of the huge work ahead of them and all reports suggest that there's some spark left in Activision's latest first person shooter yet.

More on the patch front. Microprose have recently released a patch for the lovable and hugely successful Falcon 4.0 flight sim. And the list of changes to the game is absolutely huge! Many multiplayer issues have been looked at, as well as fixes for memory problems, Tactical Engagement fixes, (continued p22)

Ion Storm try to triumph through adversity

Hot on the heels of the disastrous Dallas Observer story about the often farcical goings on at Ion Storm, John Romero has responded with actions rather than words. He's actually been rather reticent about speaking of the matter to anyone whilst the matter is in litigation (Ion have launched a suit against the newspaper), but he has announced a Daikatana deathmatch tournament late in February through Mplayer.com. Around US\$10,000 worth of prizes will be on offer, with a knockout tournament where the eventual winner might even get to face off with Romero himself.

At the beginning of the tournament a multiplayer demo version of Daikatana will be released exclusively through Mplayer.com, and the competition will run for four weeks so players should have a little time to get used to the game. The decision to release a demo version and host a tournament so soon after the scandal hits is a gutsy one, as many in the press



and the gaming public will be watching very closely for any signs of a rushed or substandard product.

It might pay off for Ion and Eidos, for if the demo version is well received and everything is in place then surely at least some of the conflicts, greed, and boardroom shenanigans behind Ion Storm will be forgotten, at least to a degree. If, however, it comes to light that the demo version was

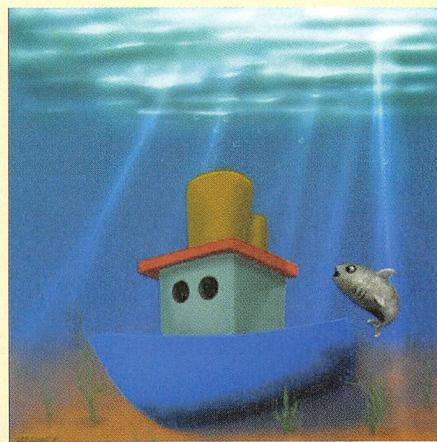
n't ready for release and the competition isn't well received and populated by gamers, it's going to add another large crack in the already crumbling walls at Ion Storm headquarters. Let's hope it's the former, because in the end it's all about the games themselves, the passion of those that make them, and the joy they generate when people play them - and this seems to have been largely forgotten during the scandal (not to mention during the development of the game itself).



Don't rock the boat

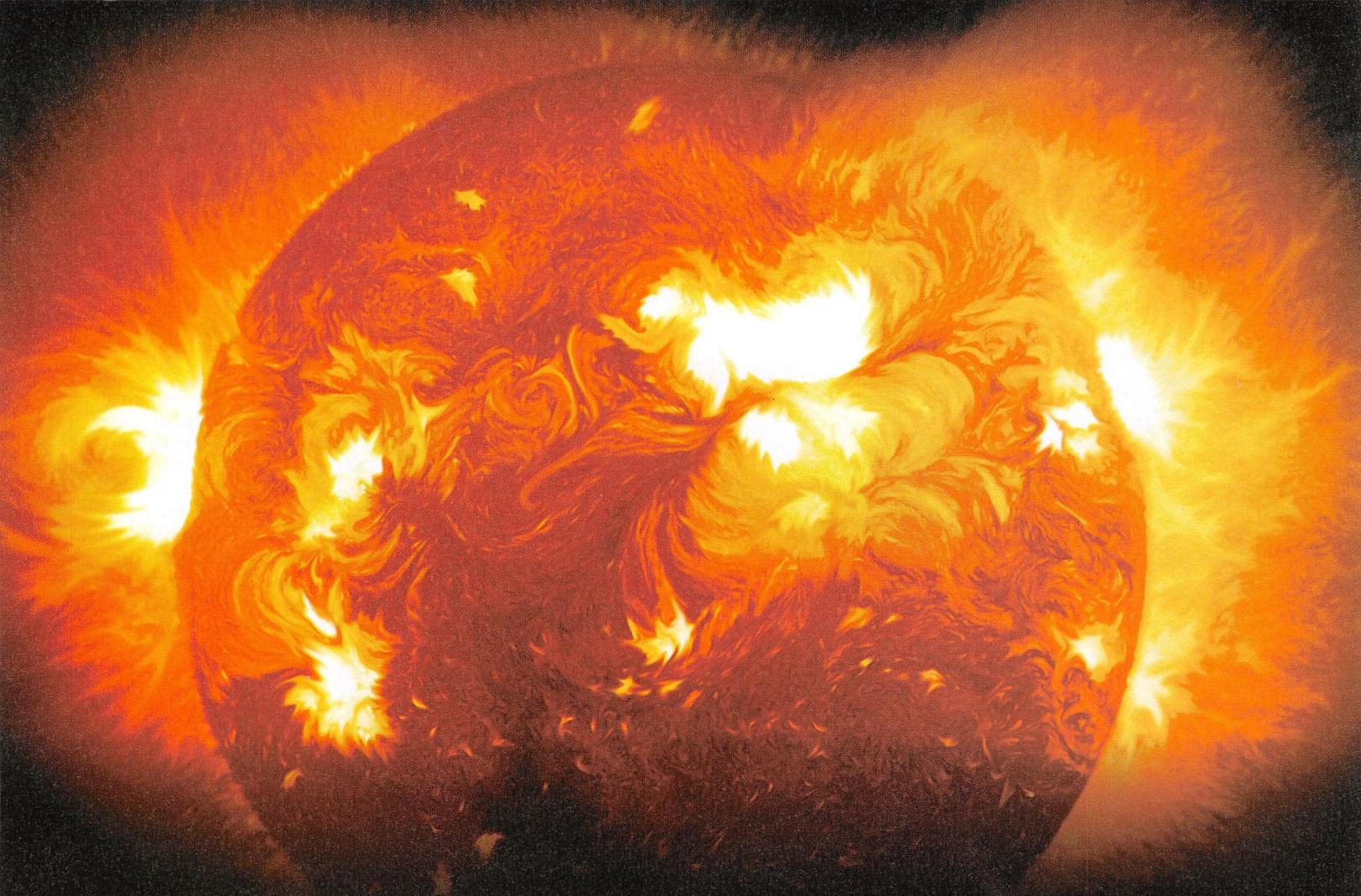
Another promising looking game has bitten the dust, in what is really beginning to become a disturbing trend for games that either don't have a huge profile (i.e. a sequel to a popular game) or aren't about killing defenceless animals. Rebel Boat Rocker was formed by a group of five ex-3D Realms staffers (along with others), with the aim of making a game that had been on their minds for a couple of years. The first person shooter 'Prax War' was well underway and had gathered a fairly strong following from interested gamers, and EA had signed the deal to publish.

Though there had been vague rumours of EA's dissatisfaction with the development of Prax War, it still came as a surprise to learn those in power at EA had decided to cancel the project because "things were not progressing as quickly as



they would have liked". In a very carefully worded explanation, lead level designer Randy Pitchford (formerly) from RBR said that "in the end, EA became uncertain about the game's schedule". The indications seem to be that the team at RBR was long on enthusiasm, ideas, experience and expertise (members of the team had previously worked on Duke Nukem 3D and Shadow Warrior), but perhaps a little short on experience working as a small self-contained business entity with responsibility towards their financiers.

Though the group has fragmented and many are now looking for employment with other groups, the two engineers behind Prax War are apparently staying behind to complete the work on the technology for the game, so the kernel of work behind the project may still surface in some form at some stage.



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Explosive Graphics Performance for your PC

We made our mark with 3D Blaster Voodoo2 - GRAPHICS BLASTER RIVA TNT will blow you away!

Look no further than Creative to deliver out-of-this-world 2D/3D graphics acceleration using nVidia's new RIVA TNT processor. The Graphics Blaster™ RIVA TNT features a scorching 128-bit memory architectures and Twin-Texel 3D pipeline to deliver mind-numbing speed in virtually any application. The Graphics Blaster™ RIVA TNT is loaded with 16MB of Synchronous Memory and a powerful 250MHz DAC for incredibly high resolutions and refresh rates with millions of brilliant colours. Settle for only the best in performance, reliability and compatibility with Graphics Blaster™ RIVA TNT from Creative.

SIDELINES

and a corrected logbook. Although this patch is a big un, it's not a complete or final one - Microprose are already working on another version update. Go to <http://www.microprose.com> for the V1.04 patch and a detailed list of all that it does.

It's finally happening! Yes! An intergalactic space opera of the likes we've never seen before! After years of teasing and releasing only teensy snippets of information, we have now have a definite US release date for the first official Wing Commander movie. March 12, 1999. Wing Commander (great title people) centres around Christopher Blair (played by Freddie Prinze Jr) and an encoded message of an impending attack by a powerful alien race. Fantastic stuff! Aussie Wing Commander fans will have to wait though, as there's been no news of a local release just yet.

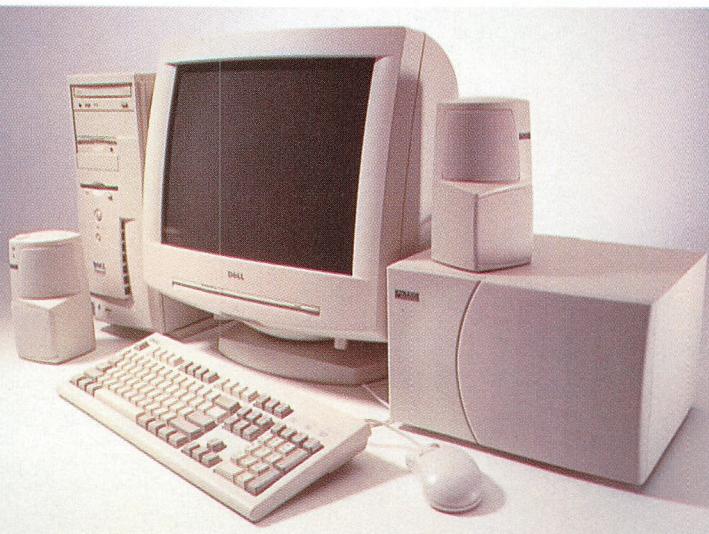
With recent news of the release of the Pentium III processors, Intel have named the range of chips over the 600MHz model. By mid-2000, P3 800MHz models will be available. Coinciding with this, Intel also announced a cut in prices of its Celeron range.

Throw those hands up in the air! Not since Ultima 7 have we seen a true expansion/mission pack for an RPG (we're not counting Sierra's Diablo add-on Hellfire in this though). Called Tales of the Sword Coast, this expansion pack for Baldur's Gate features new characters, new items and new locations to explore. You will need a copy of Baldur's Gate to run the expansion pack, though you do not need to have finished the game to start the new quests on offer.

After selling a million copies of its N64 title Mission Impossible, French developers Infogrames are set to bring the same title to the PC. As expected, the PC version will be an enhanced one - featuring 3D accelerator support, CD quality sound, new menu design and interface as well as the use of sampled speech from the film.

Researchers at the Michigan State University (US) have found that repeated exposure to virtual reality (not the pseudo-fun head gear stuff, but things like computers, TV and radio) can temporarily affect the brain's perceptual system. Further studies on head-mounted displays found more interesting results. Extended usage induced "simulation" sickness, and even LSD-like flashbacks in adults. Hype or hard facts?

Dell ready Pentium III's for local release



Dell invited PC PowerPlay to come down to their offices in Frenchs Forest, Sydney to see the next additions to the Dimension line of computers. What's so special about this system is the fact it is the first Pentium III system we have seen.

The machine was the top of the line Dimension T500, powered by a 500MHz Pentium III. The video muscle was supplied by a STB nVidia RivaTNT card which by the time the Dimension is available will have KNI enabled drivers for even more speed. The sound was provided by the awesome Turtle Beach Montego II (A3D 2.0 capable) which certainly wasn't let down by the mind blowing Altec Lansing ADA 880 speaker system. These speakers have to be heard to be believed, offering full Dolby Digital AC-3 audio output to five separate channels.

The most impressive demo shown while at Dell was a version of Rage Software's Expendable, which showed off the astounding graphics produced by the combination of the Pentium III and the TNT card. This game will ship with all Dimension T systems as a sample of what the Pentium III can do.

Dimension T series offers the following system build choices:

Motherboard: Dell branded Intel Seattle III 440BX with or without Yamaha audio on-board

Processor: Intel Pentium III 450 or 500MHz

Memory: 64 - 768MB (256MB DIMM support)

Video Card: ATI Rage Pro 8MB AGP 2x

Audio: STB nVidia Riva TNT 16MB AGP 2x

Speakers: Yamaha DS-1 64 voice (Integrated with Motherboard)

Hard Disk: Turtle Beach Montego A3D 64 Voice

CD-ROM: Turtle Beach Montego II A3D 320 Voice

DVD-ROM: Harman Kardon (2 satellites)

Monitor: ACS-495 (2 satellites and subwoofer)

Monitor: ACS-880 (4 satellites and subwoofer)

Monitor: 8.4 GB - 25.0GB

Monitor: 17/40x Variable IDE CD-ROM

Monitor: 4.8x Toshiba DVD + CineMaster 3.0

Monitor: MPEG2/AC3 decoder card

Monitor: 15" Flat Panel LCD display

Monitor: 21" Sony CRT

All Dell systems are configured to the customers requirements. Other options are available like ZIP drives and the choice of operating system, check out their website at www.dell.com/ap for more information.

Garry Wallis

Roll and roll over Lara

After meeting her in person and having seen everything from Lara dolls to patented Lara thigh holsters, the last thing we expected to be the source of any excitement was a collection of mouse mats featuring the intrepid super star.

And boy were we surprised! One perfect day, a box load of the finest mouse mats we ever did see arrived at PC PowerPlay. Each, an undeniable testament to the appeal of fine computer artistry.

See Lara! as she leans back in a puddle of water, beckoning.

See Lara! wink seductively at a point somewhere to the gentle left of you.

See Lara! as she er, makes an art form of the breast-stroke.

See Lara! squat in an almost un-lady like manner.

See Lara! ride, baby, ride!

See Lara! shoot to kill.

See Lara! reach out to you.

See Lara! highlight her features as she hugs a corner, ready to pounce!

Thanks to the always lovely Estella at Hillard we have six each of the 8 different Lara Croft mouse pads described above to give away. For your chance to win, just answer this simple question:

Q. It's the gameplay, and gameplay alone, in the Tomb Raider series that has garnered so much success for the franchise, rather than the meaningless exploitation of a computer generated overendowed lass in tight shorts. Discuss.

Send your answer in an envelope with your name and address on the back to:

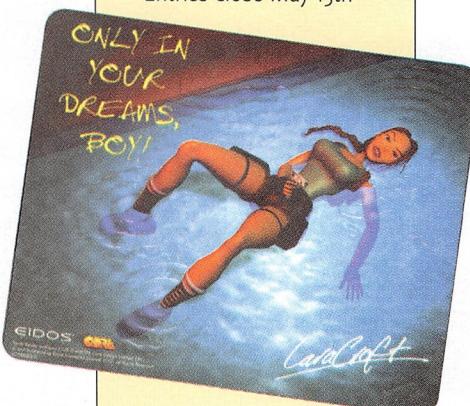
Lara Pad Comp

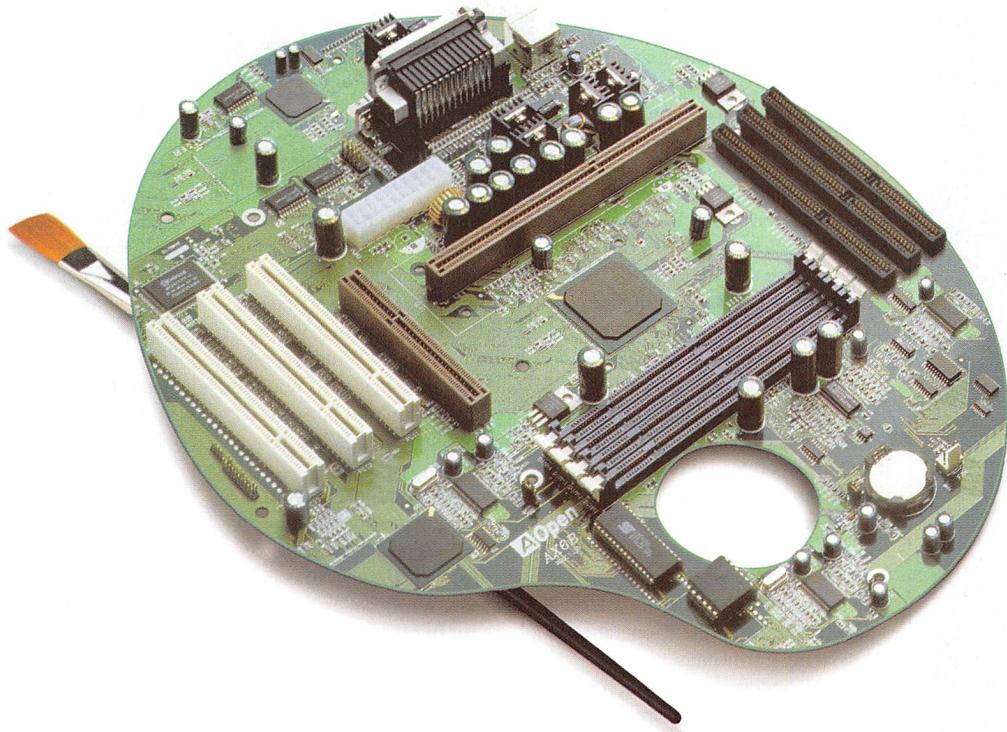
PC PowerPlay

78 Renwick St

Redfern NSW, 2016

Entries close May 13th





OUR BX MOTHERBOARDS ARE STATE-OF-THE-ART.

By using only the finest material, AOpen has created three motherboards considered not simply state-of-the-art, but works-of-art.

The multi-awarded AX6B features 4 memory slots, 4PCI, 3ISA and 1AGP slots, while the AX6BC (Type R) features 5PCI, 2ISA and 1AGP and supports 16 sets of Clock Frequencies. The AX6B Plus adds Ultra-wide 7880 SCSI on board.

“...the best BX board on test.”
PC Authority - Motherboard test feature June '98

“...it's a dream board for performance enthusiasts.”
Editors Choice - APC Mag - BX Motherboard test July '98

Of course, our motherboards exhibit their best performance and capabilities with AOpen's component collection of cases, graphic cards, sound cards, CD-ROMs and DVD-ROMs.

For further information, please visit our web site at: www.servex.com.au, email to ddeng@acer.com.au or contact our distributors listed below:



Mainboards



CD & DVD Roms



Sound cards



Graphics cards



Cases

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Serv/5947

SIDELINES

Mattel (most famous for the Star Wars range of toys) and Intel have paired up and developed a range of PC enhanced toys. The Intel X3 Microscope and the Intel Play MezCam are currently available for the hefty price tag of around \$180 a pop. These toys are not just overpriced standard kits either. The Microscope can be plugged into a PC, and allows for images to be scanned and played with on screen. The Play MezCam plugs into the PC and allows children to view and record live footage on screen, for manipulation later. Give your kids a head start!

In the US in 1998, there was more email sent and delivered than the amount of conventional postage mail was. And a rough guesstimate? A couple of billion messages? Nope. 3.4 trillion messages made it across the internet last year, compared to 107 million articles of snail mail. Other interesting figures gleaned from the study shows that there are over 263 million email addresses around the world. As far as for Australian figures, we'll let you know as soon as someone publishes the exciting findings.

The February 3rd Webcast of a Victoria's Secret fashion show pulled more viewers than the screening of Bill Clinton's grand jury testimony. If that doesn't speak volumes for where America's interest really lies, the fashion webcast also pulled another milestone - drawing a record of 1.5 million visitors to the event.

Gateway, Japan are expanding their product profile and opting to use the AMD K6-2 in some of their retail package systems as opposed to the traditional Intel processors. As the package system market accounts for a large chunk of a chip developer's sales, this move by Gateway is putting pressure on Intel. And what does that mean to us? Even cheaper processors in the near future!

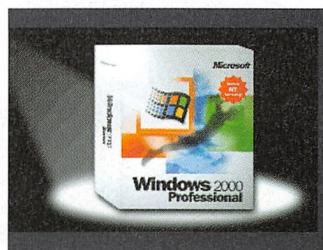
A little birdie has just whispered in our ear that it seems there might be some tough times ahead for 3Dfx. Maybe their decision to buy out STB might not have been their best idea ever. Dell and Compaq, two of the largest system sellers in the world, have been responsible for an extremely hefty proportion of STB and 3Dfx's OEM sales, and have always helped to provide 3Dfx with a pleasant looking balance sheet. Or at least they used to. Seems that the two have come to the conclusion that nVidia's TNT chipset is the way to go (along with the TNT2 when it becomes available), and are about to announce that they've dumped 3Dfx based cards completely.

Microsoft announce 'new' OS

Microsoft has done a splendid job of absolutely confusing the general Windows-using public of late. With the most recent version of Windows NT beginning to show its age and the question of the Windows 9.X kernel beyond 98 already being voiced, the future of the Microsoft OS has been shrouded in mystery. Was it to be released as Windows NT 5.0? Or would we see a Windows 99? Neither or both? Better still, did Microsoft know themselves?

Microsoft recently announced that Windows 98 is to be the last O/S based on the Windows 9.X kernel. Users of Windows 95/98 (that's most of us) are not to worry though, as Microsoft has pledged continued support for these operating systems for a good few years to come. And we can all count on a pledge from Uncle Bill.

So what's next in line of operating systems from Gates' playground? Windows 2000, which is essentially the next mainstream Windows OS (along the lines of Win 95/98) combined with Windows NT 5.0. This marks a move by Microsoft away from



DOS based OS's (the Win 9.X series) towards a more integrated standard. While the software is essentially built on the NT kernel, the GUI and appearance will be almost identical to Windows 98. So if you're familiar with Windows 95/98, you shouldn't have any problem diving into Windows 2000. If all goes to plan.

Windows 2000 is set to ship before the end of 1999, though experts predict that the release will slip to a date well into the new year. Windows 2000 will also ship in other versions, supporting the more specific demands of existing NT users. These versions include Win 2000 Professional, Windows 2000 Server, Windows 2000 Advanced Server and Windows 2000 Datacenter Server.

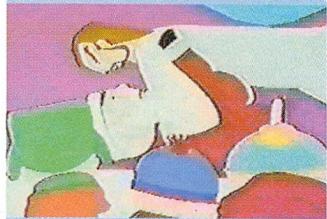
Team Fortress 2 no longer add-on



Since our preview was written last month, Team Fortress Software have decided to make Team Fortress 2 a stand alone product, meaning Half-Life is no longer required. The reason behind this is so the developers can manipulate the engine more to their liking to produce a better game. Of course, this sent much of the online community into hysterics due to TFS's apparent "selling out" especially those who bought Half-Life just to play TF2.

Comments regarding Valve and Sierra's allegedly avaricious behaviour online in newsgroups and message boards have not been particularly polite, to say the least. In an effort to combat this, Robin Walker from Team Fortress Software has said that there is the possibility of a rebate for TF2 for Half-Life owners, though this had not been confirmed or denied at the time of going to press. Hopefully, at any rate, the end result will be that the final version of TF2 will be the better for the extra work and refinement, but we'll have to wait and see.

Tiger Woods goes to South Park



In what has turned out to be a story that everyone in the world bar EA management have found hilarious, it seems that a naughty staffer at EA somewhere decided to include a special gift to purchasers of the Playstation version of EA's Tiger Woods Golf '99. To receive their gift, users would have to go through a fairly involved process, placing the PSX CD in a PC and then extracting a file with a false name, renaming it, then opening the file with a suitable application. For those that do go through the process, however, the reward is a viewing of the very first South Park cartoon, complete with high level expletives and a very amusing battle between Jesus and Santa Claus. EA have issued a recall for around 100,000 of the affected units that were on sale in America, and set up a customer hotline for purchasers to exchange their copy for a 'clean' version (though by all reports the hotline has been deluged with calls for how to get the movie working, rather than to exchange it). The recall is for US PSX CDs only, and does not affect PC versions of TW99.

Infogrames buys Sega Ozisoft

European based Infogrames has purchased a 62.5 percent share holding in the long established Australian software distributor, Sega Ozisoft.

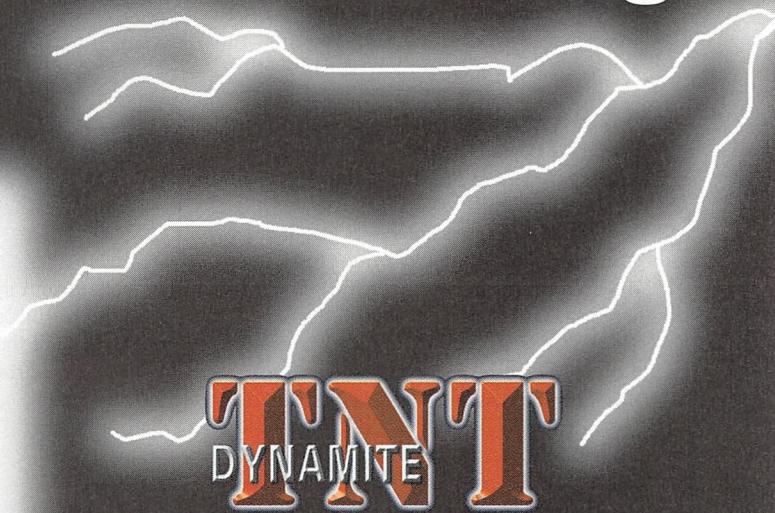


Sega Ozisoft have vast experience distributing software here in Australia, and have enjoyed immense successes with their console titles over the years. The PC side of the distributing game however, has typically been a bit lacklustre for them, apart from such megahit titles such as the Tomb Raider series. With the announcement of the majority share purchase by Infogrames, Sega Ozisoft can now tap into the Infogrames catalogue of over 1000 entertainment titles, as well as a network of outlets all over the world.

Infogrames two most recent hits have been V-Rally and the N64 title Mission Impossible, selling 2.5 million copies and 1 million copies a piece. Infogrames also have the option of increasing their share holdings to 100 percent after the year 2002.

Hercules

is back, and the Gods are raving!



"This board is the number one choice for the Gaming freak..."
(Tom's Hardware Guide)

"If you are looking for a stable, high quality low cost card without all 'the toppings', Hardware Central makes no reservation when recommending the Hercules Dynamite TNT as one of the best cards on the market."
(Hardware Central)

"There's just really not much more to want in a 16MB TNT-driven solution. Best of all, with the money you can save by purchasing the Dynamite TNT, you can pick up a 3D-accelerated game that you want to buy..."
(Rod White-PCM & E Review)

"I will have NO problems buying from Hercules, as they have delivered to me the fastest, most reliable and awesome video card I have ever installed into a computer."
(Jeff Dempster of Gamer's Alliance)

Visit www.psiaust.com for more information about Hercules Graphic Cards and your nearest Dealer or contact PSI on (03) 9878 8611.

Here are just a few Highlights:-

NVIDIA RIVA TNT graphics and multimedia processor for AGP 2X

TwIn Texel Engine for single path multi-texturing

16MB of high performance SDRAM

Excellent 2D performance.

Outstanding 3D performance and 3D image quality for 3D games and professional 3D applications (Open GL)

Resolutions up to 1900 x 1200/75Hz

250 MHz DAC for SuperStable flicker-free displays



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COOL RUNNING

COOLING FANS PROVIDE MIGHTY UPGRADE MAGIC FOR LESS THAN \$100

There's nothing like getting physical with your PC. Messing around with .ini files and tweaking programs may yield fine results, but the 'hands-on' way of old is the true path to not only performance optimisation, but to the spiritual bonding of gamer and PC.

The king of physical mods is overclocking. Move a jumper or two around on the motherboard and wey hey! Free upgrade! Next in line, and directly associated, is cooling. There's something primal, something indefinitely male (sexual revolution be damned!) about bolting some new non-silicon bit into your machine and witnessing tangible results. Especially so when said bits have moving parts and make cool noises.

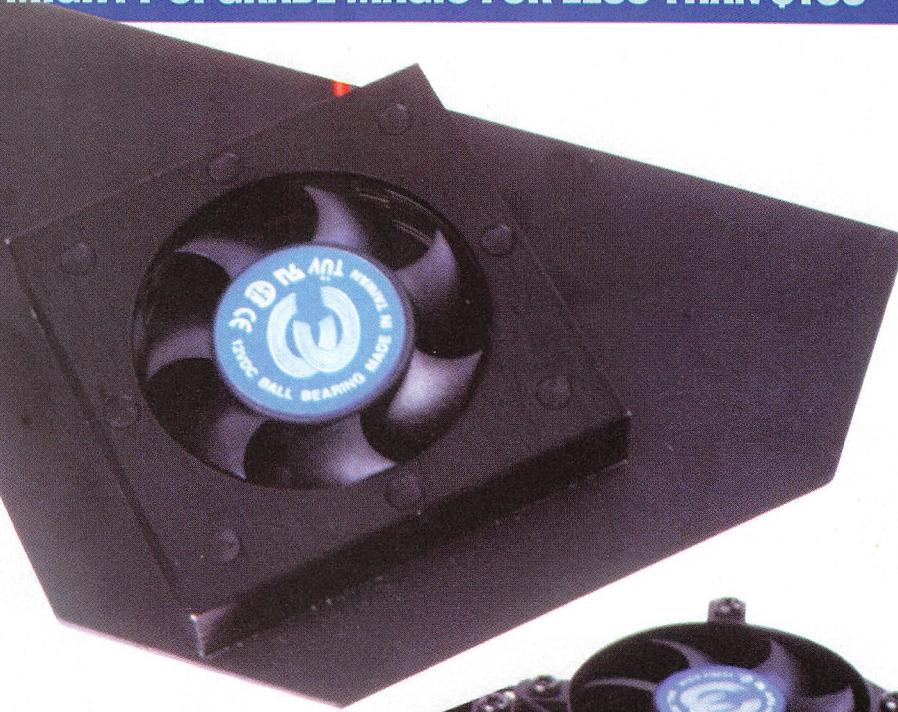
Tremendous stuff.

Cooling fans are available at just about any computer shop, but today's free plug goes to R & L Computing (04 1212 4466) for actually sending us the items you see on the page. These things are just about the cheapest system upgrade available. Prices range from \$34 (for the small Lasagna X) to \$55 (for the twin-fan + heatsink Viva P2). These fans come from U.S. company TennMax (www.tennmax.com). They are fast gaining a good reputation, primarily due to their innovative slim-line design which incorporates both the fan and heatsink in one case. This virtually eliminates any problems you may face with fitting a cooled card into an already packed case.

The Fan Club

There are several varieties of system cooling available, the most common are:

• **Large system fans.** These slide into bays



or slots in your system case. All new PCs have at least one of these.

• **CPU fans.** From small, square Pentium fans set on a small heatsink, to great stinking twin-fan

Pentium 2 coolers.

These are mounted directly on top of the CPU.

• **Card fans.** Designed for overclocked video cards. They fasten directly onto the card surface, preferably sitting right on top of the main chip/s.

• **Slot fans.** One of the sexiest conceivable PC upgrades. You just feel good having one of these in your system. They slot in just like a video or sound card, blowing cool air onto whatever it's pointing at, and venting hot air outside the PCs case.

Stick and Play

Installation is a breeze (ho ho ho...).

Most card fans use double-

sided tape, so just stick it on

the hottest chip.

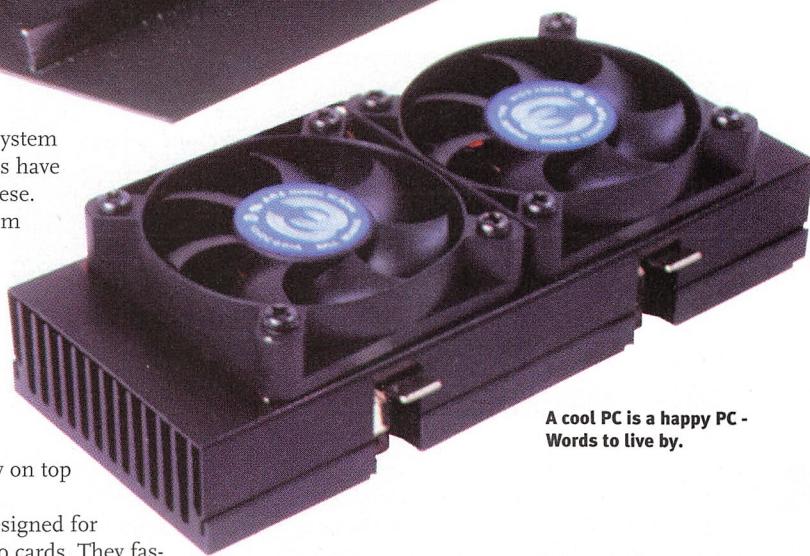
CPU coolers use either clips or

thermal glue. Each

of the fans we tested came

with detailed instructions for

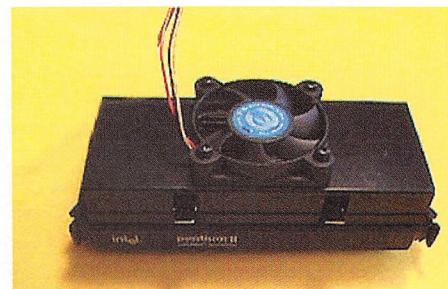
installation. The only vaguely tricky bit was the need to clean some chip surfaces



A cool PC is a happy PC - Words to live by.

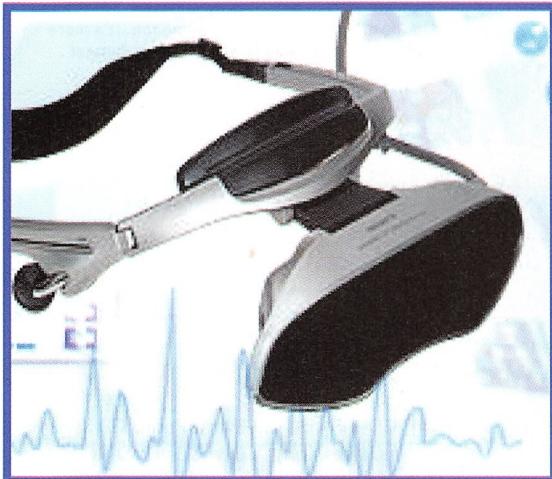
with a special solvent. TennMax recommend Carburettor Cleaner. So, we duly trotted down to the corner servo and picked up a spray can of the stuff. Be careful to let the cleaned chip dry fully before powering up your system though, Carby Cleaner is seriously flammable stuff!

We at PC PowerPlay herald the return of moving parts to the PC scene. Cooling fans are a simple, cheap and very, very cool upgrade.



SONY PC GLASSTRON

MINDFLUX: (02) 9416 9619 RRP: \$4200



VR is here. Our letter of the Month in PCPP #33 lamented that the promise of VR seems to have drifted away. Not so! As much as we dislike Sony for their injection-moulded toilet seat which has lowered the standard of games and gamers everywhere, we do love them with a white hot passion for the good they have done in just about every other area of consumer electronics.

The state of VR was dismal. Two years ago the 'headsets' weighed enough to cause a seriously sore neck after just a few minutes, with the second half of the problem being that the LCD screens were woeful. A resolution of 320 x 200 a mere inch away from your eyes equals a depressing game of 'count the pixels'.

So, Sony took a passing interest in VR, and as they do, they did it right.

The Glasstron is, in our opinion, without any doubt whatsoever, the coolest looking thing we've ever laid eyes on. No kidding. Nothing else - and we mean nothing, has the 'impress your friends' power of the Glasstron. But for once you probably won't actually be too occupied soaking up the looks of envy, instead you'll be utterly taken with the beauty of it yourself.

Glasstron is designed for several uses:

1. Watch movies (via your DVD walkman or camcorder) while doing the trans-Atlantic run on the Concorde.

2. Throw out your monitor and do all your regular computing with the Glasstron on your head.

3. Install the optional motion-sensor and play games like you've never played them before.

Yes, I think we'll take #3. It has only been weight and picture quality holding VR back thus far, and the Glasstron (it's not such a silly name after you say it over a few times...) tackles both with style. It weighs in at just 120grams. That's nothing. You literally forget you're wearing the Glasstron. Design here is stunning. Sony's team have outdone themselves. The

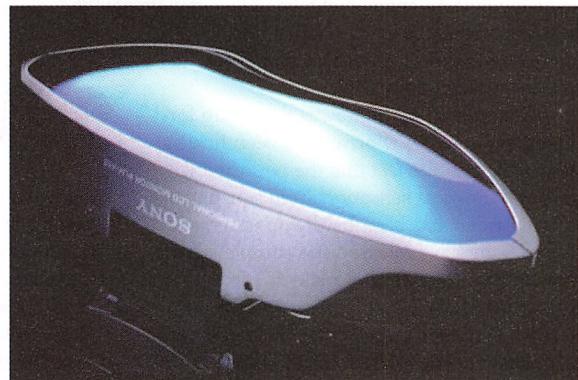
Walkman-style headphones retract via a cord into the headset at the flick of a switch. Although deceptively minimal, Glasstron is totally adjustable, with many hidden little movable plastic bits that allow it to fit every head. When the outside world intrudes, a switch instantly allows you to see through the viewer. This can also be done by degree with a dial - much like the sunglasses that progressively dim as it gets brighter. The headset feeds into the main control box, which could conceivably fit into a rather large pocket. This is the engine house for Glasstron, as well as where all the inputs go.

Of course, the other Big Important is image quality. How does this sound: SVGA resolution up to 800 x 600 at 85Hz! That is simply amazing. Naturally all the common VESA resolutions are supported too.

Testing the Glasstron that was oh so sadly temporarily sent our way was a thrill, to say the least. Those fed a lifetime diet of quality CRT images, supplanted by a healthy intake of science fiction, will be disappointed. Be gone, fools! For this is truly breakthrough technology. Flight sims, driving games and anything in a cockpit basically work a treat. FPS games do work well - for the first minute or so, before you get hopelessly tangled in the cord and trip over expensively. However, the relatively limited field of vision a 3D-cockpit game affords is perfect for seated, comfort VR gaming.

Now, while the light of the gods truly shines upon this miracle of consumer electronics, it's just a touch expensive. Like, \$4200 expensive. We do try and only cover practice and affordable products here in Hot Hardware. The Glasstron is nothing but unbearably desirable. If anything, take heart from the fact that Sony have made this technology possible and we poor folk will see the trickle-down effect manifesting itself as more affordable units.. Sometime.

Wow, Sony have once again come through with the goods. VR is finally here, or at least the hardware is. It's a Sony!



INTERNAL 5x DVD-ROM

SONY UPGRADE KIT • RRP: \$795

Ahh... The DVD phenomenon. Bugger the notion of whether or not this technology has been or will be accepted by the masses, the real question is which of the many number of DVD-ROM drives currently out there deserves your attention. Will the drive support the many different CD modes currently available? Will it read double layer disks? And will it play DVD movies without any trouble?

The problem up till now is that multi format support by DVD drives has been fickle at best. That and the fact that the performance in one of their most sensationalized functions, playing video, has been hardly up to scratch.

So Sony have released the complete package for those wanting to make the leap into the world of DVD. With support for most CD/DVD modes built in, the most outstanding aspect of the DDU220E/H is the included Sigma Designs REALmagic Hollywood Plus MPEG-2 decoder card. This card is much like your 3D accelerator, though rather than enhancing and speeding up your 3D apps and games, MPEG video files (the most common and accepted video standard) are



Ah, the oft-vaunted DVD phenomenon. It's more than just a fancy way to say CD Drive, honest.

given the boost. Which means you can view those 'Educational Biology' MPEG video clips at full screen size with a new level of clarity and speed.

And the specs go a little something like this:

Read speed 5X max. DVD-ROM

24X max. CD-ROM

Transfer rate 6,740 KB/s max. DVD-ROM

3,600 KB/s max. CD-ROM

Random access time 115 ms/DVD-ROM

100 ms/CD-ROM

Interface EIDE (ATAPI)

Buffer memory 512 KB

Formats supported: CD-Digital Audio, CD-

ROM (Mode 1), CD-ROM XA (Mode 2, Form 1 &2), CD-I (Mode 2, Form 1 &2), CD-I Ready, CD-Extra, Photo CD (single and multisession), Video CD, DVD-ROM, DVD Video.

Media supported: Audio CDs, CD-ROMs, CD-R disks, CD-RW disks, DVD-ROMs & video DVDs (single and double layer) and DVD-R disks.

So for the rather robust price tag, you're getting a fast CD-ROM drive and a average speed DVD-ROM drive, with all the trimmings needed for the full DVD experience (watching movies) on your desktop. Also included within the kit are two random DVD-ROM movie titles.

XTREME P817

VIEWSONIC • RRP: \$4679

- **21" (20" viewable)**
- **2048 x 1536 maximum resolution**
- **90Hz refresh @ 1,920 x 1,440**
- **0.26mm dot pitch (0.22 mm horizontal)**
- **Universal Serial Bus compatible**
- **OnView controls with ViewMatch**
- **ARAG screen treatment**
- **Flat square screen**
- **TCO '95 certified**
- **Plug&Play compatible**
- **Windows and Mac compatible**

Although the ViewSonic Xtreme P817 21" USB monitor has been released as part of the ViewSonic Professional series, it's a monitor that would only be realising its full potential after being hooked up to a hardcore gaming system. A monitor that you, as a gamer dedicated to the finer subtleties of visual delights, would most definitely want to take home to love and smother with affection.

While the viewable size of 20 inches is what will grab most people's attention, the P817 stands out with its maximum resolution rate of 2,048 x 1,536. The refresh rates are equally impressive - up to 180Hz. For the maximum resolution (2,048 x 1,536) the refresh rate is at 85Hz, and at 1,920 x 1,440 you get a

healthy 90Hz. The ARAG (anti-glare) screen treatment uses a process to refract unwanted light, making the images seen on the monitor sharper and more vibrant. Big and sharp, just the way we like 'em.

A key feature of the P817 is a four port Universal Serial Bus hub, which allows the hot-plugging of four other peripherals and the ability to have them running simultaneously. Though this is a feature primarily aimed at the professional user, the ability to juggle a whole host of gaming controllers and peripherals sounds most attractive.

The Xtreme P817 includes Viewsonic's OnView Host On Screen software, which allows users to running Windows 98 to adjust on screen images and colour using the keyboard and mouse. Somewhat reassuringly though, the manual monitor controls on the box haven't been done away with. These allow for adjustments such as pincushion, trapezoid, contrast, parallelogram, degauss,



Yes! Yes, yes! Yes yes yes yes yes! Papa likes!

moire and brightness.

All sounds so tasty, eh? Here's the blow: \$4679 is the RRP. That's reasonable second-hand car territory. As uneasy as it makes us feel, the fact is that it's worth it. Oh for rich parents...

SONIC VORTEX 2

VIDEOLOGIC RRP: \$249

Another Vortex 2 card is about to appear, this one from Videologic. Called the Sonic Vortex 2 it means more competition for Creative and the SB Live.

We've discussed the features of the Vortex 2 before but in case you missed it we'll go over the details again.

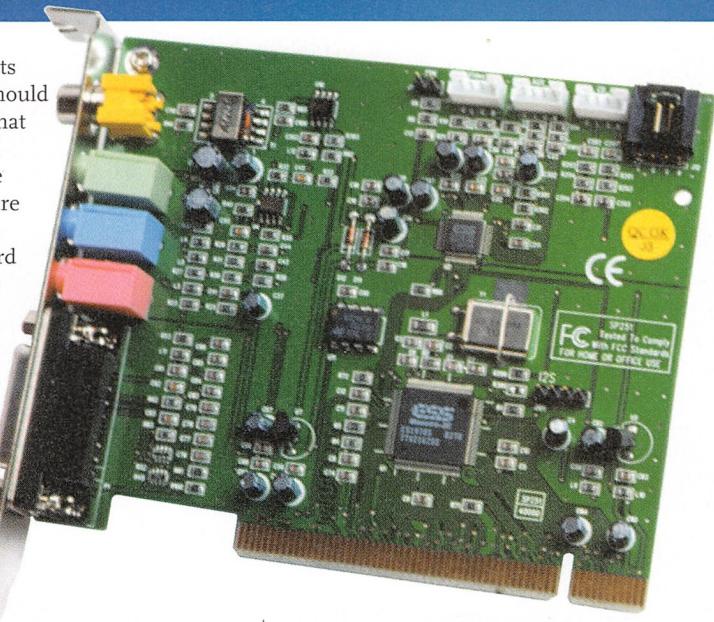
The Aureal 8830 Vortex 2 processor (featured on the Sonic Vortex 2) is a full 3D 4 speaker surround card. It offers particularly high quality audio, 4 speaker independent surround and a geometry processor that allows the card to calculate complex effects based on geometric positions within the 3D environment.

The beauty of the geometry processor is that all the sound processing occurs on the card freeing up the CPU for the game at hand. This reduction in CPU means higher frame rates in your games. Although the card fully supports Direct Sound 3D and A3D 1.0, it should be noted that the full geometric processing aspects of the card are done through A3D 2.0, Aureal's native sound API.

The card also features 16 simultaneous 16 bit 48khz (3.3 Khz higher than CD quality) 3D sound streams and a 320 voice

wavetable and effects synthesis chip. It should be noted however that only 64 of the Midi voices are hardware and the other 256 are software generated. The Midi on the card does however allow for downloading of instruments for music composition, just like Sound Fonts on the SB Live.

New features that Videologic have brought to the sound card is S/P DIF output. This is a particularly nice function as it allows for pure digital music data to be sent to either a DAT or Sony miniDisc system. Most modern Dolby AC-3 systems also support S/P DIF which means the Vortex 2 can offer pure digital data to the decoder increasing quality.



Don't let the size of modern-day sound cards fool you, they're the real deal. Great sound, great options, and nice prices too. If you haven't already, it's time to wave goodbye to your age-old SB16 card

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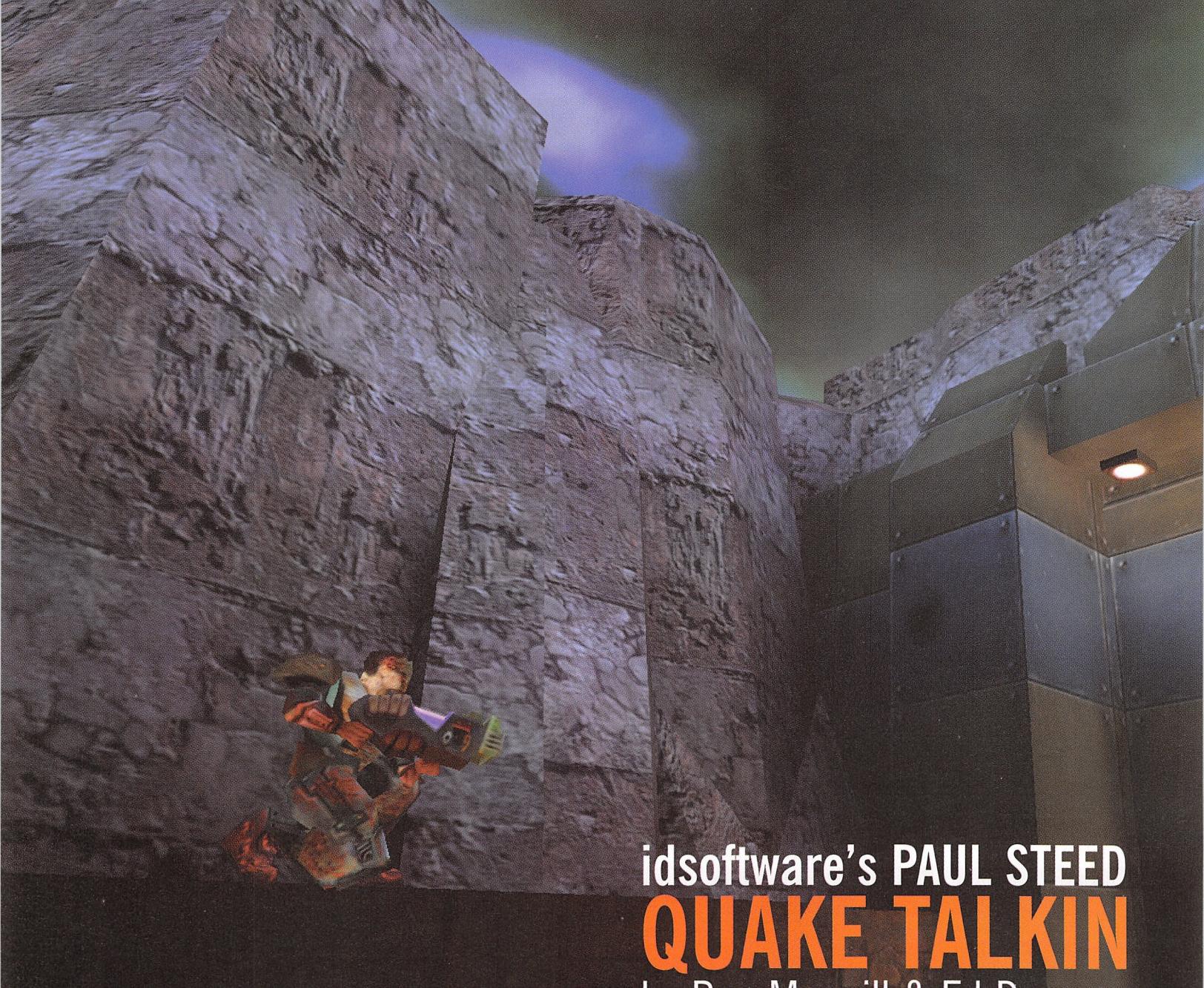
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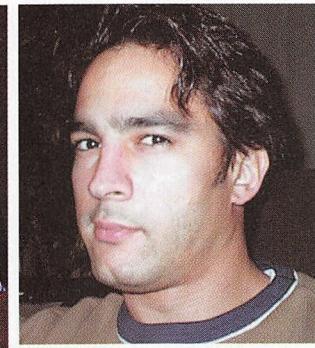
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idsoftware's PAUL STEED **QUAKE TALKIN'**

by Ben Mansill & Ed Dawson



We like our game info straight and undiluted. That's why idsoftware's outspoken Artist Paul Steed was a sensible and logical choice for an interview. Who else could possibly provide exclusive insights into Quake 3: Arena combined with such a deviant sense of humour? You go Paul!

We've heard quite a bit about "bringing back the magic of Doom" for Quake. What can you tell us about the variable physics, and the gameplay 'profiles' included with the game?

There will be a light, medium and heavy class of character. Light class characters are quicker but take less hits. Medium guys are typical characters and heavy will be slow taking more damage. Q3A will feature more noticeably pronounced physics like knockback, bouncing gibs,



better and accurate lighting, true color textures, visible weapon and more realistic animations with a detached head, upper and lower body animation scheme.

Speaking of Doomish leanings, the Plasma Gun seems to be making a triumphant comeback! Not to mention the Lightning Gun from classic Quake. Is id intending to compose Q3 Arena as a "best of breed" game that incorporates elements of all the previous, multiplayer id titles?

Q3A is indeed the culmination of all id games into the Supremo Multiplayer Experience in Gaming (SMEG for short). Go buy some adult diapers while they're in stock.

We've all seen the sexy mirrors uncovered in the recently released footage. What does a mirrored surface bring to the game, from

an artist's perspective?

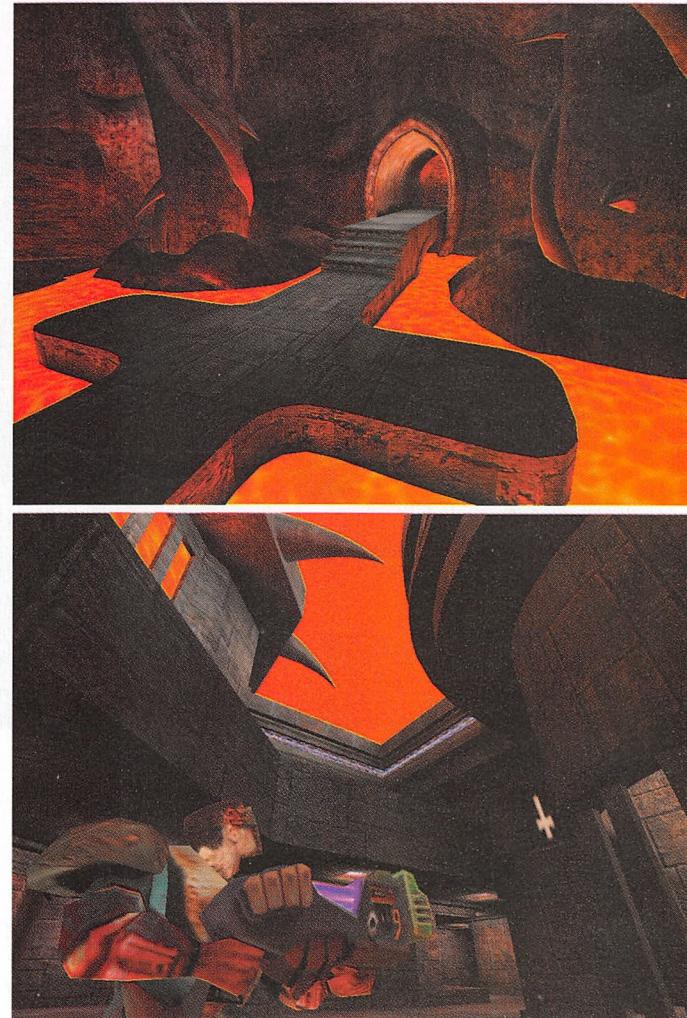
You can see if you've left the fly down on your suit of armour.

Any more environmental effects in the pipeline, in a similar theme?

Lightning in the sky, cloud movement, cloud shadow-casting, and whatever else Carmack'll stick in there.

The AI of computer-controlled opponents has been getting a lot of attention lately, does the genius of John Carmack come through in their behaviour? And are you giving them character traits, or habits, like real players?

John Cash has been working on the AI since we began Q3A so I'm sure it'll be kick-ass. Carmack will no doubt put his finger in the pot and ensure some fantastic AI if need be. We're all campaigning for voice taunts but we'll see.



Obviously Q3 has the most sophisticated environmental effects of the id games so far, how does this influence or assist your designs in terms of lighting and character detail?

Not very much. It's really a subtle and icing-on-the-cake kind of effect. We don't want you getting fragged because you're in awe of the sunset or something. It does color the map accurately, though, based on the color of the sky.

Tell us about the Q3 sky: Animation is obviously back, do you prefer this to the cool environment rendering you did for Q2?

Do you have this perverse 'sky' fixation or something? Really, Ben. You should ask your therapist about that. Actually, no I don't mind not doing special environments because it's less for me to do. The reasoning and purpose of the backgrounds I did in Q2 aren't the same or as compelling in Q3A this time around.

Custom player models are getting really (more) exciting and flexible with the intense complexity of the Q3 spec. Many people will undoubtedly build their own. Is there a compensation for the visual size of a model, versus its

impact-collision zone? For Q2 some dodgy 3rd party models were larger or smaller than their 'hit' area. Will there be a variable 'hit zone' for Q3 models?

As in Q2 the player's bounding box will always remain the same and be hard coded to avoid cheating. Adjusting your bounding box to a tiny point would make a person pretty hard to hit. Other than that I think the customizability of the models are foremost in our mind.

Are you building a cool Q3 Crackwhore model?

Actually I plan on doing a crackwhore NUN this time. Should go over well in the Vatican.

Online deathmatching marked a paradigm leap in gaming in many ways - not in the least that the gameplayer ceased to be merely one that controls the actions of a designed character, but rather the players themselves become virtual participants in a virtual world. Is this the REAL Virtual Reality that we're all waiting for?

God, yes. I devoured all that 80's cyberpunk stuff by Gibson, Walter Jon Williams, Robert Reed, Bruce Sterling and recent-



ly Neil Stephenson's 'Snow Crash'. Q3A is in all Quake games IS the closest thing to VR on the planet. You're the first person whose acknowledged that. I knew you were good at what you did.

Who makes the rules for game-play? All id staffers have identifiable roles, but who actually designs the game rules and parameters?

Good question. I have no idea. John more than any one person, I reckon.

We've seen and heard much about Arena's use of curved surfaces. Can you give us a hint of the design possibilities this enables?

It makes the game less boxy and much slower.

Were there any wild and crazy design concepts that had to be dropped because of the importance of network optimisation?

Plenty, but they're too painful to talk about here. I wanted to put in ALL kinds of lewd animations and gestures that enabled

people to do really neat stuff like sit and converse using typical hand gestures and head nods, etc. Of course I knew the whole intercourse animations would be cut but hey, I had to give it a, er...shot.

Is the architecture in FPS games getting too complex for backyard level-makers? There seems to be a resurgence in Quake 1's mapping style - it being maybe a little easier...

Yes and no. It will become more complex and require more hardware horsepower to do the map-making thing but the price of computers seems to keep dropping and the fervent dedication of the amateur mapper keeps rising so while I don't think it'll get easier, it will get more accessible. That probably didn't answer your question, though, did it?

3Dfx are adamant that the world isn't ready for 24-bit colour - their Voodoo 3 being 16-bit colour only, while every other silicon manufacturer is going for at least 24-bit colour in their 3D card

designs. What the hell are they thinking?

F#@k if I know. Wankers.

3Dfx also promoted Bump Mapping as the next big thing when Voodoo 2 shipped, but even the mighty Carmack can't utilise it effectively. Why did you choose traditional polygons for curves over Bump Mapping and were 3Dfx leading us astray with false marketing hype?

Bump mapping requires about four passes over a texture so it doesn't take a math genius to figure the benefit of cutting one feature like say... 'bump maps' to give you four times the texture capacity on a given level.

Quake 2 gained minor fame for not supporting 3D positional sound when the cards were in abundance. It's a pretty necessary thing to include due to the inherent nature of the game - Arena will fully support 3D sound, yes? Please?

I'll put it in myself if I have to!

Do you ever play online under an anonymous pseudonym?

'Yer Sister'

You spend all day (we hope...) imagining and designing outrageous fantasy environments - do you get home at night and stare forlornly around your living room, wishing you could click up a couple of extra gothic cathedrals in between the kitchen and the bathroom?

No. I live at work now so I just make them here. I am the Creator in my little world. Heh. Heh heh.

Id games can scare off newbies curious about online deathmatching due to the complex and intimidating command line, plus element of elite cliques with the players themselves, are you able to address that with Arena?

We plan on making it as easy as humanly possible to jump into a server. Even an AOLer will be getting their butt's kicked by anybody with a comparable ping within seconds of wanting to play online. This is a very important aspect of Q3A that John is acutely aware of.

What about the weird FPS controllers like the Frag Master, Orb, Wingman Warrior etc. The mouse



and keyboard provide perfect control - and everyone has them. Is humankind forever destined to live with this perpetual quest for an impossible design dream? Are they just stupid looking toys for rich suckers, or what?

VERY stupid-looking toys.

What the hell's going on at Ion Storm?

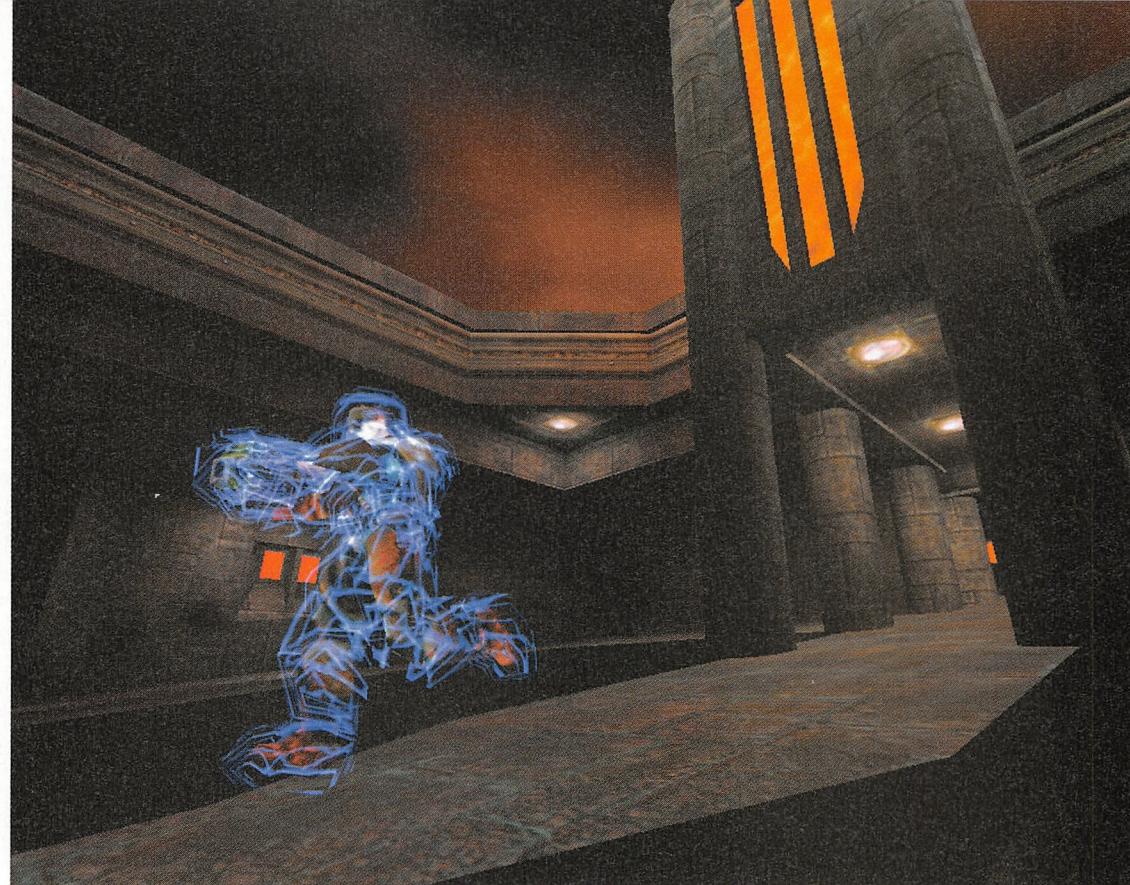
Let's see, Ion Storm...Ion Storm...Hmmm. Rings a bell but it's not quite clicking. Oh Wait! THAT Ion Storm. Well, you have a couple pseudo style over substance IDIOTS running a company manned by amateurs and surprise! You get perennially late products, weird office politics and poor-selling titles that eventually do ship. If the Titanic had been painted bright fluorescent green could the message be any clearer? Bad leadership. Badbiz decisions. Bad press mongering. Yep. That about sums it up.

Sketching robots in a school textbook is now an acknowledged path to success as a professional artist - any other career tips for up and coming artists and designers?

Stop waiting for someone to show you how to do it, work your ass off and never forget there's always someone out there better or trying to be better than you are once you do become established. If you make it in this industry and turn into a prima donna I'll personally put a boot up your ass.

As an artist, do you ever get sick of sinister gothic monsters - any sunset oil paintings in the garage by Steed?

Nope. Just ocean and light-house scenes, and barns-in-the-winter stuff. Didn't really dig sunset stuff too much back when I learned how to paint from the



old, puffy-haired, Mr. Rogers-sounding 'happy trees' guy on TV.

Why did you cut your hair?

I was hungover and depressed and I needed a change. I am growing it back, though. Too many people comment I'm 'respectable' or 'GQ' or something like that. It seems I'm doomed to be stereotyped by my looks no matter what I go with so I'd rather go for the what was it... 'Pepsi Max' look? The whole bad boy thing works for how I feel most of the time. I'm a baaaaaad man.

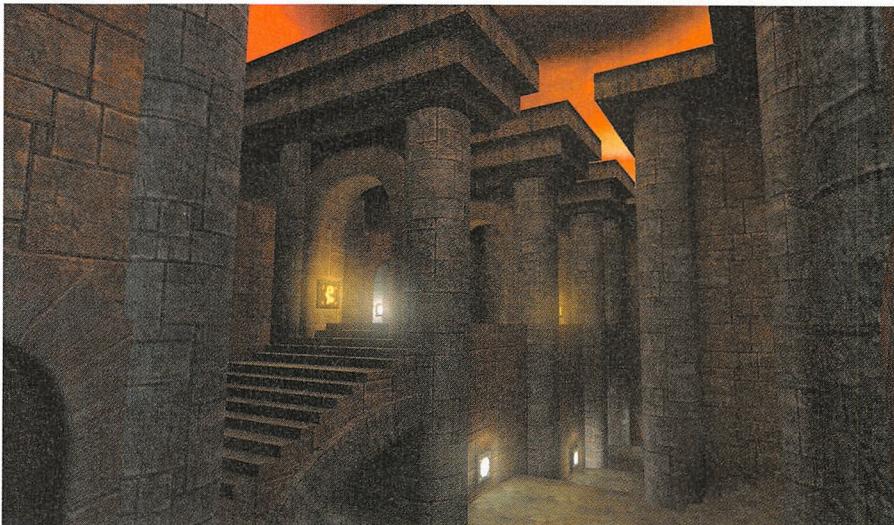
How many emails do you get each day?

Since I gave up my .plan only about 50 or so. Usually only 20 or 30 on Sundays.

What sort of PC are you running at home?

Win98 = Pentium Pro200, 128m RAM. WinNT = TDZ 410, dual P200, 128m RAM

Is id a long term commitment for you? Ever thought of 'doing a Romero'



and going off to do your own thing (we promise not to tell Mr Carmack...)?

Sure. I'll get full enough of myself one day and get a good enough offer to walk. I gotta milk the id thing all I can someday if I want to drive a F40 instead of the scrub 911. I'd even consider emigrating to Oz. No shit. Back when I first heeded the call of my gypsy blood and succumbed to the wanderlust there were two places I wanted to see before I died: Iceland and Australia. I lived in Iceland for a year and really, really, REALLY dug your fine continent. I'm truly enamoured to the land of OZ. Don't let it be a shock one day when you're pushing Steed, Inc - Oz in this prestigious rag of yours.

Who is the maddest, most unstable and insane id staffer?

John Cash

Looking forward to new Star Wars movies?

Very! I distinctly remember as a kid back in the 70's running out to chase the neighbour girl (she was 2 years older and we'd frequently get naked in my 'fort' in back), and I caught part of the first trailers featuring a big hairy guy and lots of spaceships. WHOA! What the HELL was that? Unfortunately my budding pubescent libido was squelched and put on hold while I waited in vain the rest of that summer day to get a glimpse of that trailer for THAT movie. Very deep moment in my life. Profound, even.

Is 'Trinity' a reference to the first nuclear test explosion?

I think so. Pretty much at this point in time.



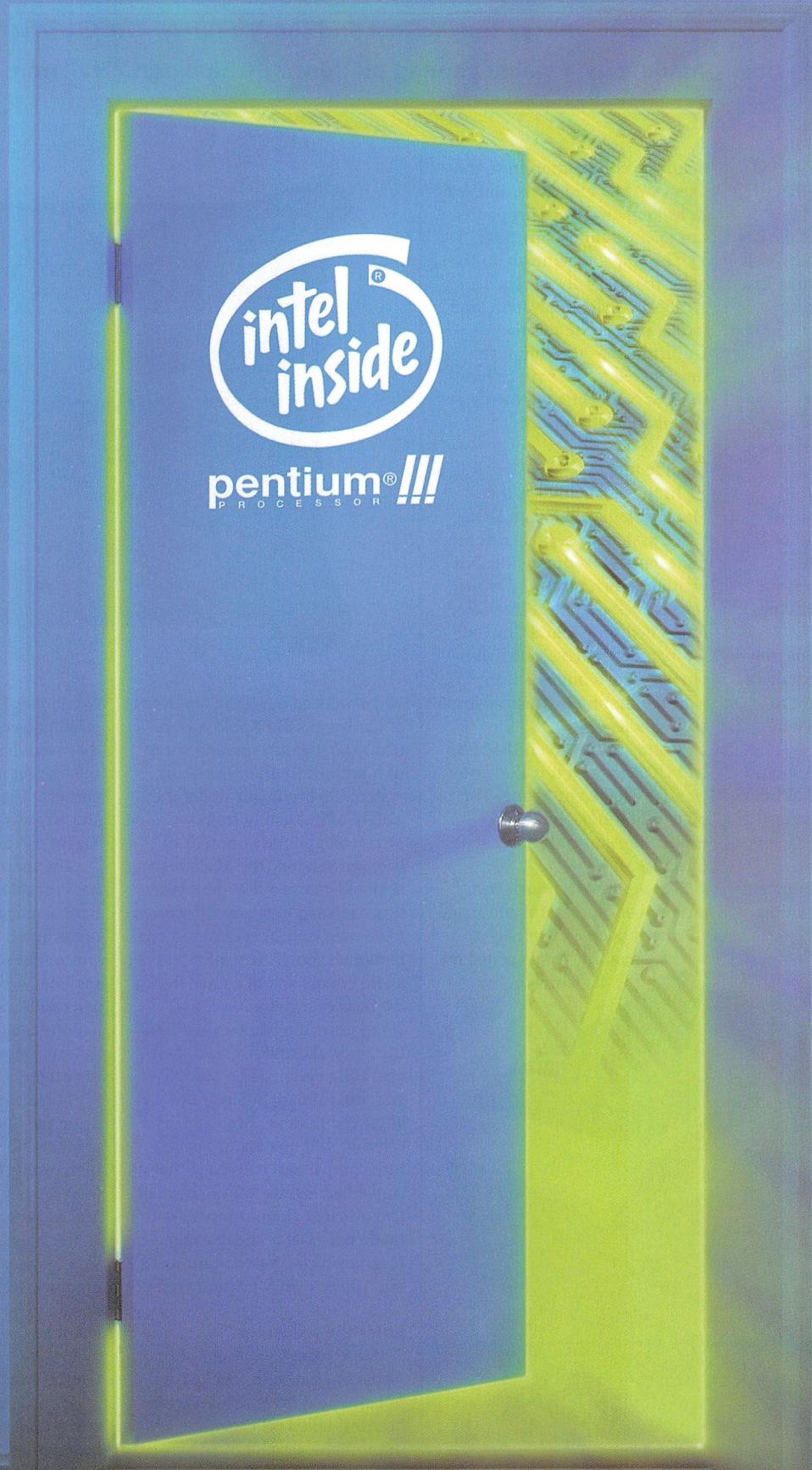
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Mac's back in town

They're blue, they're snazzy, they're fast and they're funky. The G3 Macintosh series has finally made it as a viable gaming platform. By Richard O'Halloran

An article on Macs? In PC PowerPlay? What the...?? Yes, we've decided to include a review of the latest Blue Power Macintosh G3 - because for the first time in a very long time we at PC PowerPlay have been truly impressed by a computer. Not just because of the styling (did I mention it was blue?), but because of the sheer out of box power that this machine possesses.

Brave New World

In the ideal world the new Power Mac Blue G3 would be the ideal machine. A computer where the operating system was built to be easy to use from the ground up.

Have you ever asked yourself why I have to reboot to install an application? Why do I have to reinstall my operating system every six months?

Maybe you enjoy the antiquity and hands dirty nature of WinTel computing, I know I convinced myself I enjoyed it for the last 15 years, but if computers are improving at such a phenomenal rate surely we can stop booting off DOS, can't we?

All we can do is whinge and whine, kick our computer and verbally bash Microsoft. We haven't any choice, it's always been this way and besides, things do seem to be getting better. Direct X isn't quite as buggy, Windows 98 crashes a bit less and Intel chips are getting a bit cheaper,

thanks to competition from the likes of AMD and Cyrix. But really, as long as it plays my games I can tolerate almost anything.

The Apple Macintosh on the other hand has always been a symbol of style, innovation, and intolerance of the norm. Unfortunately, the computer most suited to the masses has thus far been consumed only by an enlightened minority.

MacHistory

In the good old days the Macintosh gave the then DOS based systems a serious run for their money. Its dinky little box with its 9-inch black and white screens had graphical interface, integrated sound, and tiny little 3.5-inch disks that ejected without pressing a button - along with the first mainstream release of the mouse.

Compare that to an IBM 286 and DOS 3.0 and it makes you wonder what went wrong. The benefit of hindsight helps explain the currently sorry state of affairs.

The Apple Macintosh was enormously successful and made many people extremely wealthy. Apple rested on its laurels.



In order to make the big bucks of hardware sales Apple continued to be the only manufacturer of machines for their operating system. So eventually under the weight of marketing from Microsoft and the hundreds of licensed vendors, the Macintosh declined and in a few short years was banished to relative obscurity, to be used only by specialised professionals, publishers, film and audio editors and of course the die hard evangelists.

10 years too late they realised their mistake and licensed their operating system. The MacOS was still fundamentally more advanced than the Microsoft offering, but in a feature by feature comparison it seemed that Apple had lost its lead. The small and efficient clone companies made both faster and cheaper Macintosh computers; cannibalising Apples own Macintosh sales.

Enter the redeemer

Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple was called in to take control and he quickly revoked clone licenses, killed off expensive and unprofitable development ventures and brought Apple back into the black with several successful product launches, such as the Power Mac G3 and the iMac.

He quickly realised that if Apple were to survive, not only

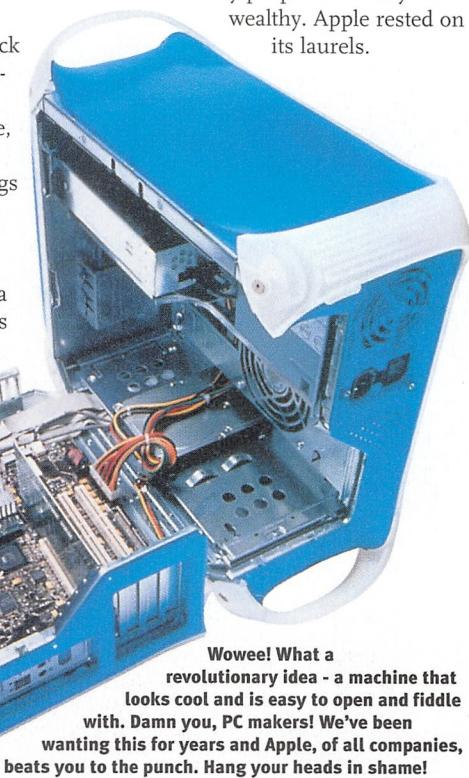
would they have to maintain their existing base of creative types, they would also have to win back the biggest market of all, the consumers. The key element of his strategy was to make the Macintosh a gaming platform.

The man who made comebacks fashionable is trying as hard as possible to woo in developers and has been particularly successful so far. Releases include Myth II, Tomb Raider, Microsoft's Age of Empires and a simultaneous release of Quake 3 Arena, along with a host of others on the way.

These are hardly enough to bring the hordes of hardcore gamers into their fold, but a few high profile titles should help in the overall consumer push. So the Mac is back, and more importantly, the latest range of offerings are setting the standard for in-built graphics, computing power and design that PC manufacturers should hopefully follow.

Gettin' Maccy wid it

It's true that the bright blue curves and transparent casing have brought with it the hype Apple have enjoyed of late. The iMac is a great machine for the average home Internet user, but the new Power Macintosh G3 (code-named Yosemite) isn't just a pretty face. This box performs



Peeking under the hood introduces you to the core of the G3 power. The PowerPC chip.

An IBM and Motorola joint development, the Power PC is the same chip that beat Kasparov (though there was a fair few of them processing symmetrically at the time). This copper based RISC chip offers up to twice the floating-point performance and matches the integer speed of its Intel counterparts at similar clock speeds.

It's true that the line between RISC and CISC has become more blurred than ever, especially with the increase of on chip registers and high performance FPU on Pentium 2's, but the architecture is still very different. The bottom line is that the Pentium architecture is reaching its ceiling very rapidly and Intel are looking at new places to go - hence the 64 bit Merced chip.

Intel are feeling the heat, literally, and their 32 bit CISC Pentium line is just getting too hot to handle. Compared in size to the Pentium II, the G3 is less than a 10th of the size and that's not comparing the G3's tiny heat sink with the P2's, proving that processors shouldn't need to run at twice the tem-

perature of the sun.

The G3 is the marketing name (3rd generation) for the PowerPC 750 processor which includes an integrated floating-point unit and 64K on-chip level 1 cache (32K for data and 32K for instruction). Also attached to this chip is 1MB of backside cache (512K for the 300MHz version) that runs at half the processor speed, or up to 200MHz.

All the Rage

The 16MB Rage 128 graphics card that the Blue G3 ships with has earned this Mac these PowerPlay pages. A 2D/3D card with support for millions of colours and awesome frame rates, the ATI Rage 128 is a serious gaming video card. If you are looking for an upgrade for your PC, forget the Voodoo 3 - you want this card. A quick look at the specs should have you suitably drooling.

This card to end all cards has a feature set that includes;

- **16MB of onboard SDRAM, hammering out resolutions of 1,920 x 1,200-pixel resolution at 32 bits per pixel (millions of colours)**
- **The Rage 128-bit internal engine (hence the name)**

• ATI's own Advanced integrated triangle set up engine

- **A single-pass multi-texturing design delivering a full 32-bit-per-pixel (bpp) Z buffer and 8-bpp stencil buffer.**

The MacOS release of Unreal runs at 640x480 in 32 bit colour at 35-45 frames per second and 60-75 frames per second in 16 bit colour mode, which significantly outstrips the Voodoo 2 card for the Mac.

With support for Apple's own QuickDraw 3D RAVE API and OpenGL (which, while supported on the Mac for some time, has now been officially licensed from Silicon Graphics), this new 2D/3D card will rock any existing games such as Myth 2 and Unreal as well as any future releases such as Quake 3.

Apple have finally realised that graphics are their bread and butter, and that if they want to keep this niche they had better catch up in the 'Bus' race. So, boosting the bus to

100MHz and running 1MB of on chip cache (called backside cache) at 200MHz, Apple are starting to catch up. While 100MHz buses have been enjoyed by PC users for some, Apple's catch up manoeuvre is said to offer almost 50% percent improvement over the older Apple motherboards.

Those with money to burn can also squeeze in up to 1GB of high-performance PC100 SDRAM, (also supported in the latest Intel chipsets), which has up to 150 megabyte per second write through and copy back performance.



I'm not a Mac fan, but...

An Alternative view by Jere Lawrence

The first thing I want to say about all of this is "no, I'm not some kind of freakish Mac fan".

We are after all "PC" Powerplay and I'm a PC head all the way. That said, the new G3's are worth investigating, for ignorance is for the foolish.

The reality about the new Power Macs is that they're aimed at Apple's more traditional high-end user base. Graphic artists, Video editors, and other digital-content creation professionals. As for the tactic to lure hard-core gamers to the Mac platform. Is this going to happen? No! What would ever possess someone to spend twice the money on a machine that can only offer at best 5% of available games when compared to the PC?

Even Steve Jobs himself proudly stood atop the podium at his Macworld address claiming that the top 10 most popular gaming titles would be on the Mac by Christmas of 1999. *Snigger* It must be fun to own a system where you're reliant on the "kindness" of developers.

John Carmack, the legend himself, made some comments regarding the Mac G3, particularly this

gem. "I think Apple is doing a lot of things right but are really just catching up to Win95".

As for hardware John concluded that basically, "it's a great system, but Apple has oversold its performance relative to Intel systems. The Mac has not instantly become a "better" platform for games than Win95, it has just made a giant leap from the back of the pack to near the front."

Essentially the new Mac systems are basically as fast as the latest Pentium II systems for general CPU and memory. They definitely don't make the Intel processors look like slugs.

On a G3 an in-cache, single precision, multiply-accumulate loop could run twice as fast as on a Pentium II of the same clock rate. But conversely, a double precision add loop would run twice as fast on the Pentium II.

The 66MHz video slot is a nice improvement over the Mac's previous 33MHz bus but it's still only half the bandwidth of AGP 2X, and it can't texture from main memory.

As for Rave, John concluded that

Macintosh's 3D API (think DirectX 2 here) was "sort of ok". Realistically it's underspecified with no growth path and pursuing a proprietary API that wasn't competitive with other offerings would have been a "Very Bad Idea". The decision, then, for OpenGL was a good one.

As for John's experience coding on the Mac he concluded that the zen of Mac development is "be at peace while rebooting". He rebooted his Mac system more times the first weekend than he has rebooted all the WinNT systems ever owned.

Mac development however can be summed up by John in this paragraph. "I was always a little curious why the early BeOS (www.be.com) advocates were so enthusiastic. Coming from a NEXTSTEP background, BeOS looked to me like a fairly interesting little system, but nothing special. To a Mac developer, it must have looked like the promised land...". The G3's are good, but they're nothing close to gaming nirvana, despite what Apple's different thinking PR people may tell you.

Burn, baby, burn

So we have all heard about FireWire by now, yes? The 400 Megabit technology dribbling from Apple geeks mouths for the last 2 years has finally surfaced in the form of two innocent looking FireWire ports on the back of this Mac. Besides the post production film editing we all find ourselves doing on the weekend, what possible use could we have for such ludicrous throughput on our desktop? Well, forget the hype about interfacing camcorders and Virtual Valarie body suits - the real improvement will be hard drive speed. Imagine twice the performance of Ultra SCSI II at the price of ATA. That's the promise of FireWire - now all that remains is to wait for a major drive manufacturer to start making them.

Universal Serial Bus (USB) is also here in a big way. USB is a technology that has been demanded since the first person ever tried to change the IRQ of a serial port, and tried and tried, and tried... USB can be daisy chained (that is, devices can link up in a chain), it is hot swappable (no reboot!) and dare I say it - this is actually Plug'n'Play! The new Power Mac sports two of these connectors and comes with a USB keyboard and mouse. Unfortunately, the mouse included is of the 'hockey puck' variety found on iMac's, but you can always purchase a proper mouse if you want (and you will, trust us).

Other impressive features of this machine include Built-in 10/100BASE-T Ethernet networking, along with the always impressively simple Appletalk networking.

Comparing Apples with Apples?

CISC - Complex Instruction Set Computing
(used in Intel, AMD, and Cyrix chipsets)

Vs

RISC - Reduced Instruction Set Computing
(used in PowerPC, Alpha, MIPS, etc)

The original differences between CISC and RISC was in the design of the instruction sets. RISC endeavours to reduce the complexity of the microprocessor, by reducing the amount of instructions that CPU supports. The functions that CISC chips could perform in a single

been developed, manufacturers such as Intel have aimed to reduce the amount of cycles per mathematical instruction. This is why a Pentium clock at 100MHz is significantly faster than a 486 DX4 at 100MHz.

Intel is relying on their ability to continue to cram more and more transistors into each chip increasing the amount of computation in each cycle, reducing the amount of cycles to complete an instruction. Newer RISC technology has aimed from the beginning to use the most minimal amount of cycles per instruction by reducing the complexity of the chip. This in turn increases the amount of instructions completed every million or so cycles. In other words comparing a RISC chip such as the PowerPC 750 to an Intel Pentium II should include more than just the cycle speed.

For example a PowerPC 750 clock at 400MHz achieves a SPECint95 rating of 18.8 whilst an Intel Pentium II at the faster 450MHz achieves only 17.2, proving that more can be achieved with less. The Digital Alpha 21164 is clocked at 600MHz yet achieves a SPECint95 rating of only 18.0. (To be fair to Digital this processor excels in floating point power not integer calculation)

But just to confuse you more the latter day reality of RISC chip design has actually led to more complex instruction sets than their CISC counterparts. The only real differences are the benefits of hindsight gained from CISC development.

RISC chips include more on chip registers, the Power PC contains 64 in total, and unlike CISC chips, use a uniform size for instruction lengths. In other words each instruction is only 32 bits and therefore simplifies the instruction-fetching and decoding logic and also means an entire instruction can be retrieved with one 32-bit memory access.

But to confuse matters even further Intel have incorporated more RISC technology into their newer chips such as the Pentium II. These include uniform instruction sizes and large on chip registers.

FPU

Floating point decimal mathematics, calculated by dedicated floating point units (similar to math co-processors) was the original mainstay of RISC. While Intel have dramatically improved FPU on x86 technology, this was the main reason why the majority of graphics computing favoured RISC technology.

MMX has also been added by Intel and others such as AMD and aims to increase multimedia performance by incorporating more set instructions for multimedia. Motorola have announced that they intend to release a similar technology for the PowerPC platform called AltiVec and therefore making their Reduced Instruction Set Computing chips much more complicated.

All in all, the line between RISC and CISC is very blurred and has almost become irrelevant. The fundamental remaining difference is that RISC chips such as the PowerPC have been designed from the ground up in the last 15 years. The x86 line dates back almost 30 years. By reducing power usage, incorporating cutting edge technology such as copper conductivity (as opposed to traditional aluminium) RISC chips like the PowerPC have much more room to grow. Intel are aware of this and are developing the 64bit Merced



Flat Panel Displays - they're the way of the future. It's just a question of waiting for the price to drop to acceptable levels now

single step would take one or more steps on a RISC chip. But as the complexity of the chip is reduced, each step would be significantly faster, allowing for faster overall performance.

Most of the comparison made in chips these days is the clock speed. A 400 Megahertz chip is faster than a 300 Megahertz chip because that chip completes 100 million cycles per second more, or so uninformed logic says.

Instructions may take anywhere from 1 to thousands of clock cycles to complete. As each generation of chip has

SPEC INT COMPARISON

CHIP

CLOCK SPEED

SPECint Score

PowerPC 750(G3)	400 MHz	18.8
Alpha 21164	600 MHz	18.0
PowerPC 750(G3)	366 MHz	17.2
Intel PII	450 MHz	17.2
Intel PII	400 MHz	15.8

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UO



ultima online

One person's definition of UO will invariably differ from the next. We sent our resident Ultima fanatics on a working holiday to Britannia, and this is what they came up with.



Part of the magic of Ultima Online - behind these characters could be a 13 year old kid, a 70 year old granny, or a 34 year old cross dressing lawyer, or anybody else

Just what is UO?

Let's begin with an apparently easy to answer question: What is Ultima Online? Think about it, though, and you'll realise that not only is the answer far from obvious, but the question itself strikes at the heart of the problems which have beset UO since the beginning. Considering the scale of Origin's creation, the fact that it is exclusively an online and multi-player experience, the rather vague label of "persistent world" might be deemed suitable. But is it? The land of Britannia as seen in UO is surely too simplistic for such high-minded terms. On the other hand, coming, as it does, as a departure from the Ultima series, you may be tempted to

think of UO as a role-playing game. But is it? It's certainly nothing like what we have come to recognise as CRPGs, or computer role-playing games.

Fancy Chat Room

So, again, let's ask that question: What is Ultima Online? To many newcomers, UO can often seem like little more than a glorified chatroom - the proliferation of "kewl doodz" and their ilk shattering any vestigial illusion of genuine role-playing. To others, UO can appear as no more than a lame and frankly tedious deathmatch alternative - endless re-runs of the old "create character, die, resurrect, die, resurrect, die, etc" routine grow tiresome with a less-than-surprising swift-



UO

ness. Surely, however, UO can and should be so much more than these.

Ultima vs UO

As single-player games, previous Ultimas may have cast you in the role of the Avatar, the legendary superhero who perennially saves the world. UO can't work in this fashion, obviously. To have hundreds of budding Avatars running loose throughout Britannia is not merely absurd, but unthinkable. Clearly, such a situation would render the entire game unplayable. The fact that UO is inherently a multi-player game means that it cannot pursue certain features that are the staple of single-player games, such as a clear and tangible goal, a consistent story and a fixed game world. The fact that in UO the whole world doesn't revolve around your character's action means that previous rules no longer apply.

The Second Age

Another question: What The Second Age? Now this one is much easier to answer. It's an add-on pack for Ultima Online.

It brings a number of new features, including a vast new land to explore (free of the delights of urban sprawl), replete with a couple of dungeons, towns and a host of new monsters, as well as a useful in-game chat system to assist the all-important interaction with other players. In addition, it also brings up to date all the various patches and tweaks that Origin have applied throughout the duration of the game's life thus far.

In some ways these address the problems that have plagued the game since its release, but many of the changes are mere tinkering around the edges. Here at Powerplay, many of us as ardent Ultima fans as you'll find anywhere, and we believe that Origin (and others presently developing future online RPGs) need to go further if UO is to ever get near fulfilling its undoubtable potential. Origin need to ask themselves - or, better still, ask us players - precisely what is the main advantage a game such as Ultima Online possesses over other games. The short answer, of course, is that it is a multi-player game. The longer answer would



Roam the lands in nothing but your underwear. Such is the flexibility of the UO world. Wacky, eh?

take into account the possibilities for player interaction that this multi-player capacity opens up. Thus, in order to improve what is first and foremost a multi-player game (as opposed to a role-playing game), Origin has to make a virtue of UO's multi-player capacity.



Some French players surveying the battlefield. The sting of the sword transcends all language barriers

Player Killing

Why Player Kill (PK) in UO? Potentially a contentious question and one that I'm assured will have emotive responses from many, but I shall confess; I have PK'd. That is to say, I have engaged in player vs player combat, killed individuals and taken their items.

However these people that I hunted were the real player killers, the ones that indiscriminately killed any player that came along, the innocents. I was what was referred to as an Anti-PK. I do confess however that I have killed rival guild members as mercilessly as any PK.

In a game such as UO, or in any multi/mega player game for as long as one player has the ability to kill another player, PK'ing will exist. This is simply because no artificially intelligent opponent will ever offer the kind of challenge that another human can. They can't lure you out of hiding into an ambush of friends. They can't psychologically provoke you into attacking or making a

mistake. In short they don't offer nearly the same challenge.

The original argument in UO was that a lack of monsters drove players to kill each other. Maybe this statement has some credence but PK'ing is even more prevalent now than it was at the beginning. This is because of the inclusion of guild wars. Particularly Chaos vs Order, where a player in either guild can kill without penalties other players in the opposing guild anywhere, even in towns. The difference is that players choose to enter these guilds and can leave them easily if it gets too hot.

Regularly in UO these days it is not uncommon for "scouts" to traverse cities looking for opposing guilds then reporting back to a group so they can come hither and slay the enemy. The victim in turn sends out the alarm to his allies and a large scale war will ensue. As a participant and as a spectator there's a certain excitement when this happens. Arrows flying

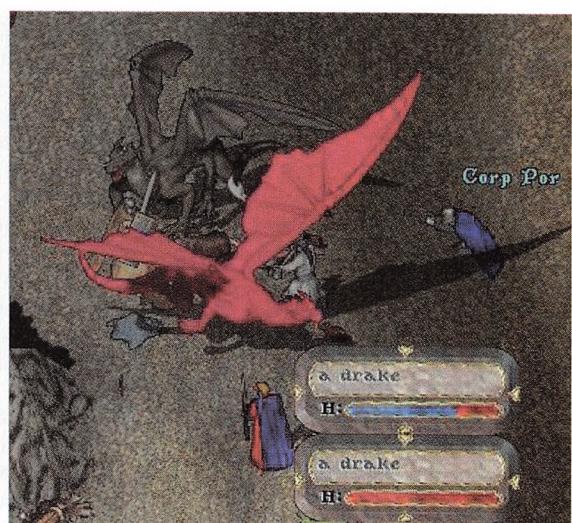
back and forth, the clash of swords and the sound of horses hooves resound over the city or dungeon - and this is exactly what the players want.

Whole cities have been taken by Chaos and Order members have charged in to try and reclaim it. It all comes down to excitement and very real adrenaline. Talk to anyone about battles such as this and almost all will admit to getting the shakes at least once. That's because in UO, dying can mean a lot, at least a lot more than Quake 2 and other games of this ilk. Die and you lose armour, weapons and items that may have taken hours or days to accumulate and stockpile - the feeling of loss is real. Win and the spoils of war are yours. Their armour and weapons lying upon bloodied corpses for you to 'loot'. The sense of accomplishment immense and memories of these battles will linger in your mind for years, as real as any "real-world" achievement.

Jere Lawrence



A brave (or foolhardy) group of players attempting to subdue a Drake in Dungeon Destard. They mysteriously died soon after this picture was taken.



Combat and death

Currently, the level of interaction offered by games is limited. Consequently, combat tends to play a large role in the gameplay of any game. Yet if, as we have established, UO is to be more than a deathmatch arena, its multi-player interaction must go deeper than mere combat.

One factor in diminishing the primacy of combat would be to make the death of your character more significant. We would like to see death be something that is to be feared and avoided at all

costs. Players now mark death as a mere annoyance, and a tool with which to annoy other people. But if death really made play difficult, or marked a point that is hard to turn back from, people would have to play the game in a substantially different way. Other things we would like to see include more quests and a greater role for player characters in the economy (since buying and selling is done, beside a few exceptions, wholly with faceless NPCs). A more diverse range of characters, even monsters, to play



Guilds

Calling Ultima Online a mega multiplayer game (as it's also commonly known) is a bit like overstating the obvious. UO is only playable online, against masses of other people. This is after all the whole point to it. Thus there are guilds in Ultima Online. These guilds are groups of people that band together and adventure throughout Britannia together. Only recently too, were these guilds officially recognised by the game. By purchasing a Guild Stone, any player acting as guild leader can choose to enlist any other players they wish to into the guild. In game, the main "technical" features of being within a guild is that you can have an abbreviated form of your guild's name in your player titles (for identification), and more importantly, you can attack other fellow guildmates without receiving a penalty

to your notoriety level. This allows for sparing (which is used to raise skill levels).

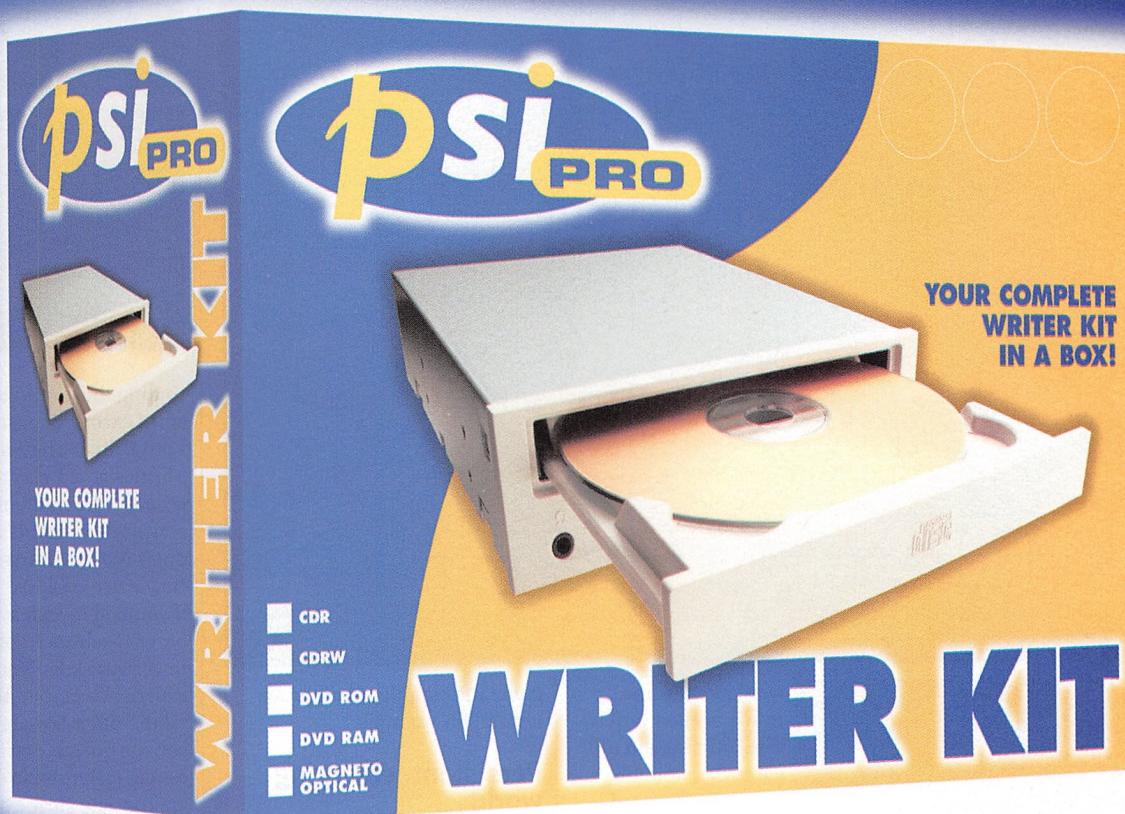
There are far more beneficial advantages that come with being part of a guild. The most notable aspect is, quite simply, support. If a Liche Lord has gotten the better of you, or a player killer has ambushed and killed your character, and of course taken all your prized possessions, you can always return to your guild and stock up on a fresh supply of weapons, armour and provisions. Playing with other people (which is heavily encouraged by in-game mechanisms) is also much more fun.

There is however a common philosophy which seems more prevalent amongst newer players. That Ultima Online can be approached much like a single player game. That you create your character, log onto one

of the many UO servers, and begin your quest to slay the evils roaming the land and eventually even, become the saviour of all Britannia. That you can exist much like the fabled Avatar did, in solitude - calling on assistance only when the need arose.

While Ultima Online doesn't exactly discourage this kind of play, it is near impossible to pull off successfully. In reality, UO can be a very challenging and frustrating game, especially at early stages of your character's development. If you're not running from deadly monsters or relentless player killers, you're getting bitten by the lag bug or being hit by a client crash. Freshly murdered, lacking any defences save the basic clothes you were wearing before death, it's hard to recover. So while it's not compulsory to join a guild in UO, it is almost a necessity.

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UO



Mass name spamming. What can't be shown here is the incredible lag that accompanies this many players on screen at once

would lend some much needed variety. The introduction of gargoyles would be a small step forward and also remain in line with Britannian history, but the possibilities truly are endless. Imagine living in an orc tribe in the mountains around Minoc, terrorising the nearby townsfolk at night or proffering your services as a

guide through the treacherous terrain, for example.

Persistent, changing world

Of course, the most important change would see the eight virtues given heavy emphasis with each town strongly differentiated according to its virtue. Let's face it, this is one area that sets Ultima apart from every other RPG, online or otherwise. What a change it would be to see displays of compassion, honesty and valour rewarded, instead of success

finding those who behave in a spirit exactly opposite to what Lord British originally intended. Shrines could play a pivotal role here. At the moment, they're just resurrection points and, as such, don't fit the Ultima lore of old. Better use could be made of them if you had to visit a shrine in order to advance your character in certain skills. You might earn experience points (through not killing other law-abiding players, solving quests, doing "good" deeds, etc), then to visit the appropriate shrine and chant the mantra to gain your desired new abilities. Conversely, giving another incentive to play decently, "evil" players wouldn't be able to use the shrines to resurrect, nor to gain additional skills.

UO - an uncertain future

Of course, all this talk of expanded and deeper interaction is merely what we would like to see happen. There's nothing wrong per se with Origin deciding to go another route, perhaps with an even greater focus on combat since this might seem to be an easier (and more profitable?) option. The trouble here is, however, that Diablo does it so much better already and with Diablo 2 on the way shortly, who's going to give UO's awkward and unpredictable game-play a second look? Besides which, the whole idea runs completely counter to everything that

UO and Jere Lawrence

Ultima Online to me means the mark of a new era of gaming. One where the enemies are real people, the challenges and risks great, but the rewards even greater. Morning after morning I have spent playing this game and with each new skill advancement and refinement of my own play style the game becomes infinitely more.

I say morning after morning because that's when the lag is least frustrating. Being in Australia the closest server is in California and the last thing you need when fighting a nefarious PK is the

dreaded pause. So, to bed at 9pm and up at 2:30am to play. This was my roster for well over 4 months until sleep deprivation finally took its toll.

I have fought and killed evil players as famous as Hobbes and Sir Monkey. I've slain dragons, worn unique items, chatted with beautiful women and tamed every type of animal. I have done it all in UO and I will continue to do so. For the game is made special by its players and I am but a small cog in a very big wheel.



UO



Ultima has stood for in the past. Britannia has never been a place where the sword reigned supreme, nor a land in which min/max players prospered. Rather, it has always been about

the people of Britannia, the community and the interaction that goes on between. Origin need to recognise this before it's too late.

David Wildgoose &
March Stepnik



UO and David Wildgoose

I played Ultima Online for the first time late last year, in readiness for the then imminent arrival of The Second Age. My experience was, I think, typical of the newcomer's feeling of being overwhelmed amid the confusing and directionless gameplay. After creating my character, Madge, a tinker type who had served me well throughout my adventures from Ultima IV to VII (until the female character option was cruelly eliminated in Pagan), I set forth with the aim of...well, I wasn't really sure what my aim was. But then, I guess, that's the whole point.

Meeting up with Polvo outside the Blue Boar Inn, we decked ourselves out in some flimsy armour and ineffective weapons

before hitting the countryside in search of some action. Regrettably, this action consisted of trekking through vast amounts of urban sprawl that now blights the land between Britain and the Serpent's Teeth Mountains and then getting killed by some unknown monster, whose presence I failed to notice until I realised that Madge was now lying dead on the ground. I resurrected on the spot and, since Polvo's connection had crashed, wandered around by myself, finding no one who wanted to talk to me in character and fewer monsters I was capable of fighting. Some time later, it struck me I was having no fun whatsoever, so I happily quit.

Actually, I like the fact that UO isn't - and never will be - a complete game. The idea of it as a dynamic world that changes in direction and ideology like the real world is something I find appealing. Unfortunately, for me it still remains a world that is too limited, too restrictive in too many ways. Sure, single player games are restrictive in many ways, too, but the good ones provide other satisfying experiences. UO promises player freedom as its chief selling point, then fails to deliver it. When the boundaries of that freedom are constantly revealed to the player, it's far more disheartening than if they were never promised in the first place.



LAN PARTY LEGENDS

They're fun, but they're about so much more than just gaming. Spoony sacrificed his self-respect and much, much more to get this hard hitting report from behind the scenes at a LAN

It's approximately half past eleven on a Thursday morning, and the area of hard wooden floor you occupied a couple of hours before has been invaded by prying eyes and an all too loud voice. "Hey Fuzzball, want a game of Half-Life?" You roll over, muttering a slurred expletive, slightly distracted by what looks like a group of people snorting citric acid they found in the kitchen and fall back asleep. It's been a hard night of gaming, and has taken its toll.

Local Area Network Parties are fantastic, but even the most hardcore game player can't play

games one hundred percent of the time. So what does actually go on at these parties besides game playing? The four day Gibstock II LAN party was a perfect opportunity to find out.

Getting to know you...

As with most large LANs, not everyone knows each other. This may or may not be a good thing. Of course, it can be even worse when people do know each other, especially when they're sworn enemies. In our case, certain people (who shall remain nameless) decided to go on a "Snack Run" to the 24-hour

Supermarket up the road, which provided an opportunity for certain other people to lock one door with a chair and the other with a Wheelie Bin (don't ask). Gaming actions do speak much louder than violent actions though, and all would be settled when the game playing began. Or would it?

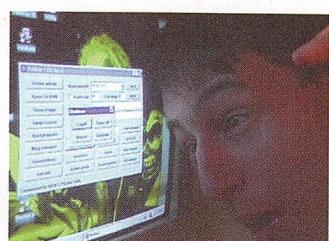
There's always one

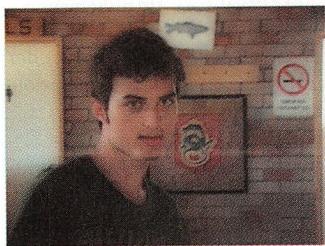
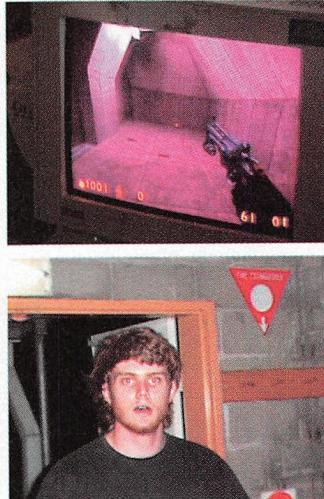
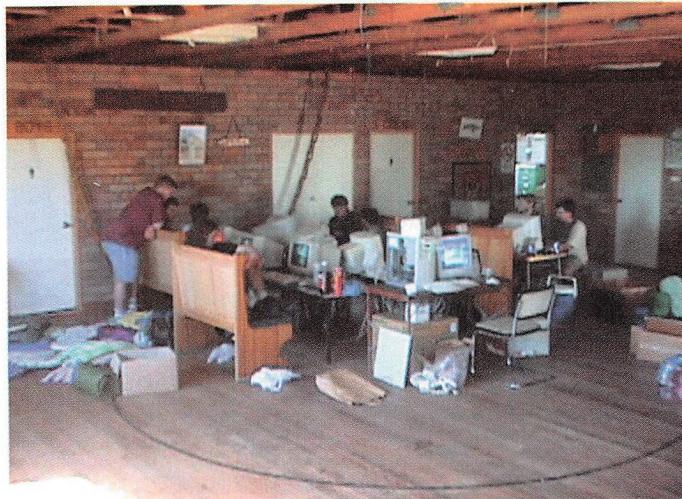
Setting up the network is something which should theoretically take about five minutes. Due to Murphy's Law though it will probably be well into the first night before any serious

gaming goes on. There is always one PC, which can simply never get on the network. Even after every diagnostic program has been run, about four different network cards have been installed and even the hard drive and OS replaced, it still just sits there stubbornly not allowing itself to be talked to. This is even more annoying if it's yours.

Declaring shenanigans

While hours are passing, the fifteen or so people who have arrived so far need something to do. Listening to a few MP3s is always good, or a CD or two, but





all this goes out the window when everyone tries to out do their next door neighbor by seeing whose speakers go loudest. Aside from that, some people found putting Back Orifice on other people's computers as something to pass the time. Even going outside for a game of cricket was considered, but was eventually forgotten after laughing hysterically at one person's bowling action. Bored gamers get annoying, real fast.

Time keeps on slipping

Once the gaming gets going, everyone settles to a dull roar. One game of just about anything can seem to take about half an hour but usually winds up going for at least five times that long. When the gaming finally grinds to a halt, either due to a crushing victory or a struggle so tight no one could be bothered playing any more, people tend to get hungry, and don't like it much if they have to wait around for their go at the feeding trough.

cheapest available, and Gibstock II returned at least one hundred bottles of 2 litre el-cheapo cola, whilst the two major brands found much less patronage. There are a couple of reasons for this, one is that gamers spend so much money upgrading their CPUs, video cards, and even cases that they can only afford to spend 91c on a 2-litre bottle of cola-flavoured beverage. The other is that anyone with any "classy" food was instantly branded as a target for many, many midnight (or, in reality, 4am) "Snack Liberation" sorties.

Snacks are probably the

major part of any self respecting LAN goer's diet. It's amazing how much any one person can consume without moving from the one seat in six hours. Meals, however, are treated much differently.

LANs usually consist of two main meals per day, one at about 1pm, the other at 8:30 or so in the evening. Breakfast doesn't count, because you get it yourself by heading to the kitchen and pouring yourself a big bowl of no-name Cocoa Puffs with a bit of milk splashed on top to wet the first few as they go into your dry mouth. The other two "Main

FOOD

It's for eating

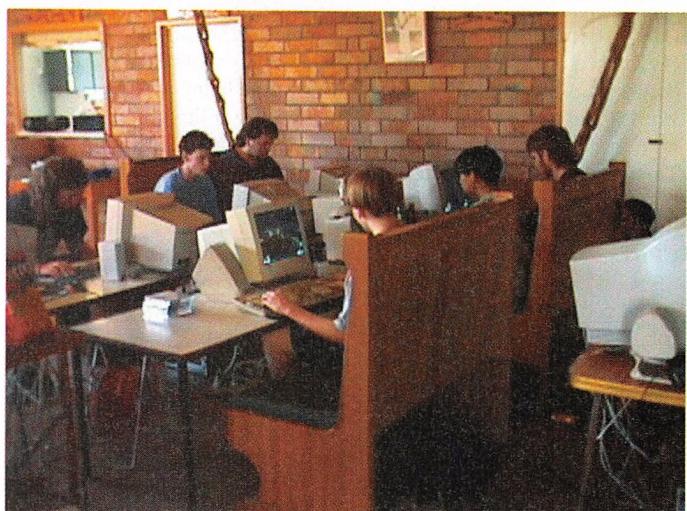
Food at LAN parties divides itself up into two categories, Meals and Snacks.

Snacks are by nature quick and easy, and preferably can be eaten with one hand or less. A wasted extra three seconds chowing down on your favourite "unhealth" bar could mean the difference between victory and defeat. Almost all snacks are the



The LAN alphabet

- A** is for awake. See C
- B** is for Breakfast, which will usually happen sometime around 3pm
- C** is for Caffeine and Cheapo Cola. The staple liquid diet
- D** is for Death and destruction. Virtually, of course.
- E** is for Edible food, not much of this will be found after the third day.
- F** is for Frag bait. Be nice to them, for they know not what they do.
- G** is for Grouse Aussie Culture, which LAN Parties are sure to become part of after this feature.
- H** is for High Ping, which shouldn't happen on a LAN, but usually does anyway.
- I** is for Incidents involving idiotic idiosyncrasies (and a Wheelee Bin)
- J** is for Junk, whether it be food or bits of broken furniture.
- K** is for KoRn and other cool LAN party tunes.
- L** is for LANs (of course)
- M** is for Michael's 48 Port hub. MMMMMmmmmmm!
- N** is for No surrender, and no excuses like 'My computer crashed right before you killed me!'
- O** is for Oasis and other CDs which are great coasters
- P** is for Protection of munchies. Paramount!
- Q** is for Quakin, Quakin', and Quakin' some more.
- R** is for rest and relaxation, something you don't get at LAN parties.
- S** is for Sleep. See above.
- T** is for tormented people who like to tie themselves up.
- U** is for underhanded tactics, like pulling out monitor cords.
- V** is for Vain attempts to steal munchies.
- W** is for waste not want not. ie: Munchies left a lone for more than five minutes.
- X** is for Xylophones, because you need something to do when the network goes down.
- Y** is for Yelling and screaming, which is not advised at 3am.
- Z** is for Zerg, and the scum that they are.



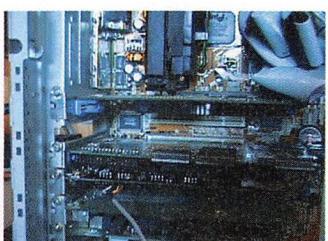
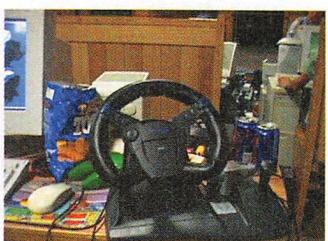
Meals" are pretty much the only time there is a complete halt in gaming. Whether it be fifteen dollars worth of chips and a few loaves of bread or seventeen large pizzas, it's a communal time. However, the same rivalry from every other aspect of the LAN continues in the realm of food as well. Should anyone even think of stealing that last piece of Barbecue Meat Lovers Pizza...well, at the very least their snack horde will be in serious Peril.

There's always one...

While food keeps everyone going, it also provides a few funny moments. On the last morning after most people have gone home there is usually about ten half finished bottles of all sorts of drinks left lying around as well as some slowly decomposing pieces of what might be generously described as 'food'.

Once the packing up has begun and the first car load of stuff has gone back to where it came from some people decide to be a little bit creative. After scouring the kitchen for a few minutes someone found some red food colouring, some concentrated citric

acid and an almost full bottle of Ginger Ale. The combination was deadly. So bad that people started taking bets on who could skull the lot. No one in their right mind would even consider it, but since we were at a LAN party most of the people there



don't qualify for owning any semblance of a right mind, so we eventually conned one contender into giving it a go with a ten dollar prize on offer.

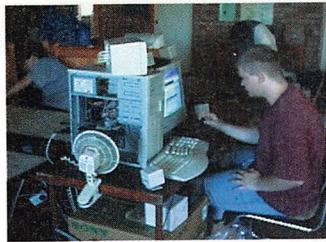
He got through most of it, somehow. With the end in sight and just the floating chunks to go our would-be hero took a dive, and then immediately almost threw up. What made matters worse was he had just drunk over a litre of the most vile mixture ever devised, and didn't even get a cent. The only thing he did get was to enjoy watching everyone else rolling around on the floor laughing at him, and the knowledge that he was a bit of a moron.

Oh Mr Hart, what a mess!

Cleaning up is the most painful part of the LAN Party, the slothfulness of the last four days has finally caught up with you and it's not pretty. Especially when you've had only about six hours sleep for the past three nights. Sleeping habits for most LAN goers are about the same - play games until eight or nine in the morning, crash in some corner, get up about two or three hours later and continue where you left off. Some people try and go for the whole time without sleep, and they look like they might make it, but after about forty five hours of solid gaming all but the strongest of will feel the sandman tugging very hard at their little lids at which point they'll collapse, not to stir for some fifteen hours or so.

Hang 'em high

When this does happen they become instant prey. When you're in a scout hall there is always a rope or two hanging around and anyone who had reclined to a shadowy corner was likely to wake up with at least one of their limbs tied to another object, inanimate or not. Some



people do ask for punishment though, especially when they ask if someone can tie them up to see if they can get out. Screams of "Please! Loosen the rope" were of course ignored, and the soon to be tackling bag realised the error of his ways, and immediately started working on ideas to square the ledger.

What games to play at LANs is always a huge arguing point. At almost every LAN there'll be at least a couple of people who are extremely skilled at one particular game, often Starcraft and Quake. While most people are casual gamers and play everything a bit some people have professed to playing Quake on the net for at least two hours a day. This causes quite a decision when someone who used to be considered one of the best Death Match players in the area is asked to "make up the numbers" for a four player team stoush. Do you play for a bit of fun, or do you keep your integrity? Quite a dilemma.

Vulcan Mind Meld

The only games which people aren't generally that great at are the newest ones. Which causes another problem, not everyone has a beast system, so those people are left playing

Quake a bit more, no wonder they're good at it.

Even though there might be twenty computers networked there won't be too many games going on with more than ten players at a time. In fact the biggest game we had was a thirteen player Quake 2 Capture the Flag match. Or maybe it was fourteen. One ambitious pairing decided that it'd be much more fun if one person used the mouse and one the keyboard. For ten minutes or so of playing as a two minded player the pair racked up five frags, most of which with the Railgun and stole the enemy flag several times only to find that through the incompetence of their team mates theirs had been stolen too. Maybe some people know each other a little too well.

Underpant Gnomes

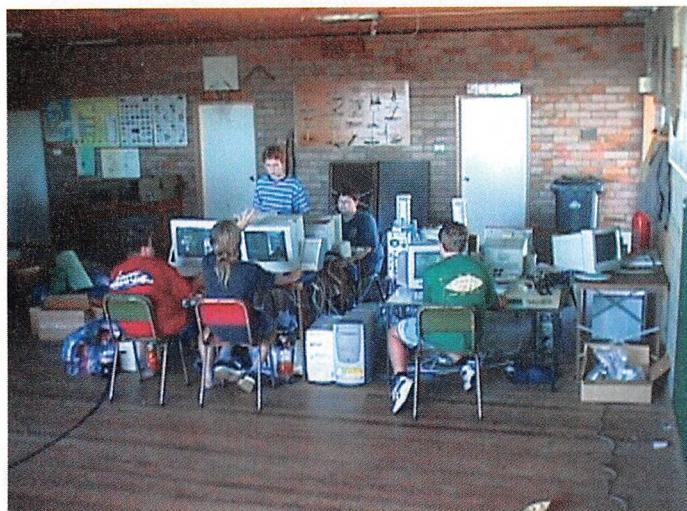
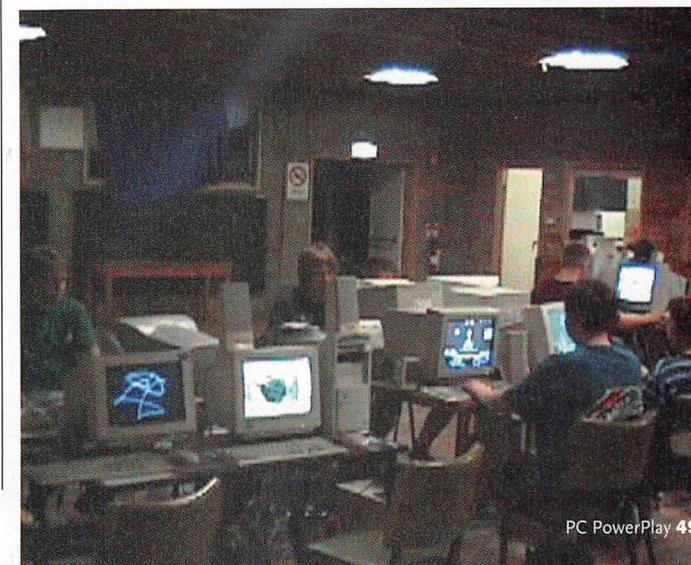
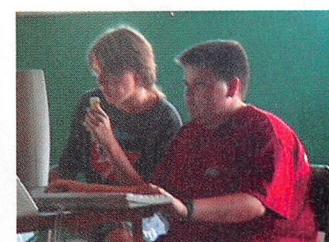
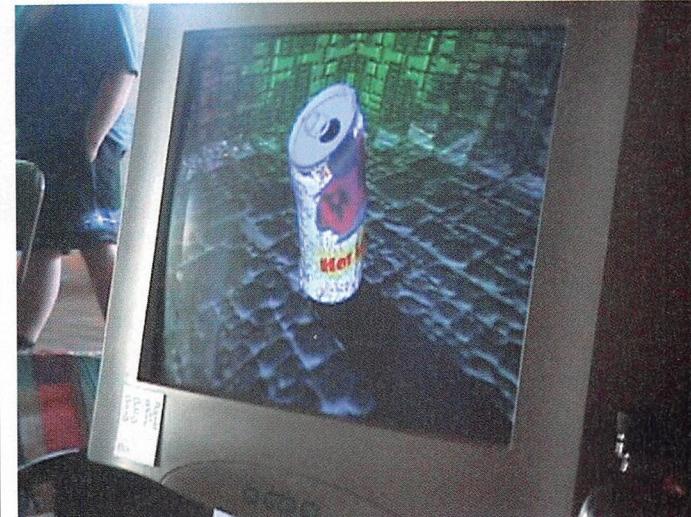
It's not just the games which make LAN parties a great experience, although they are the reason for the get together in the first place. It's heaps of fun just to interact with the same people for four days straight - or of course it could be your worst nightmare. But, you get out what you put in, and if you try not to get annoyed with people sampling your Jolt Cola and

enjoy the thrills, spills and breakages (sorry about the steering wheel incident) of a good LAN then everyone else will too. Sure, you might get locked out, tied up, hammered at Quake and see some disgusting excuses for human beings in their natural habitat...but hey, you

asked for it by bringing that PII 450 anyway.

Rod "Spoonman" Campbell

Special thanks for this article must go to Vincent Packer for organising Gibstock II as well as "Teppo" for taking the photos with "Gra's" digital camera.



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Adventure/RPG

David Wildgoose

Latest word on the two most promising new adventures is that the cyber-fantasy of Funcom's *The Longest Journey* has slipped to the second half of the year (to ensure it's as excellent as initial impressions indicate), while Sierra's third instalment of the *Gabriel Knight* series is nearing completion and should enter its QA stage by April. *Mask Of Eternity* and *Quest For Glory V* may have been rushed out the door for Xmas, so I'm glad to report that Sierra have given Jane Jensen and co the time to get their game as close to perfect as possible.

Discworld Noir plunges you into the dark underbelly of the famously intestinal city of Ankh-Morpork. Casting you as Lewton, the Discworld's only employable private detec-



tive, the game promises (in between taking the piss out of film noir classics) a departure from the silly inventory based puzzles of previous Discworld games with, instead, an emphasis on proper, clue-collecting detective work. And, of course, it should go without saying that the always lovable Death will make a cameo appearance at some point.

Based upon Jules Verne's eponymous novel, *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea* is the next Video Reality adventure from Southpeak Interactive (whose *Dark Side Of The Moon* I'm presently playing - review next issue). Mixing FMV footage with pre-rendered 3D graphics, the game seems to take its source material as merely a starting point for an expansive tale that will have you visiting diverse locations such as Atlantis, the Bermuda Triangle and Antarctica, natch. Though I remain unconvinced by Video Reality's usefulness, the story will hopefully be enough to compensate.

Completing a trio of literature related adventure games this month, we have *Big Brother* from MediaX. George Orwell's disturbing, totalitarian world of 1984 provides the mise en scene for this ambitious 3D action/adventure. Like the ill-fated Trespasser (although hopefully not too like it), Big Brother expects to deliver us a "fully interactive" world to explore as you fight to regain your humanity in the face of oppressive evil. Of interest is the way your reputation - i.e. a measure of the moral worth of your actions - will affect encounters with the various people you meet during your quest.

RPG news next month, I promise.

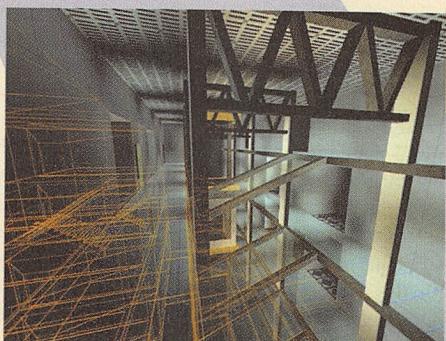
Action

George Argy

Current Game Versions:

Quake2: 3.20 (id have stated this is final)
Half-Life: 1.0.0.8
Unreal: 2.20 (2.21 may be out as you read)
Sin: 1.01
Shogo: 2.0

Barely weeks after Valve announce that *Team Fortress 2* will be a stand-alone game, news at hand is that they will also be producing *TF2 Classic*; a vanilla version of TF2 that will be an add-on to Half-Life rather than a separate game. Valve defended the decision to produce TF2 as a separate product so that they could concentrate on an excellent quality game, rather than a decent quality add-on. Do I smell a touch of hypocrisy here and the need to please every-



one? Valve are still in the good books though, because the Linux server version of Half-Life should be out in a matter of weeks.

The battle of the big multiplayer games continues this month, as news that the *Quake III Arena Test* will be available in March gets every gamer's jocks soiled. Quite unbelievably, the test will be released simultaneously on the PC, Mac and Linux, something that hasn't happened in the gaming world since, oh, say Yahtzee. In the other corner of the ring, GTi have released a rather impressive swag of features that *Unreal Tournament* will boast. Most tasty amongst these are the 35 Arenas, 3 new weapons and many game modes that will be available out of the box, such as Capture the Flag, Assault and the rather S&M-sounding Domination.

Speaking of *Unreal*, Epic has announced a partnership with Human Head Studios to co-develop *RUNE*, a 3D shooter based on Norse mythology. The game will be utilising the Unreal engine and will plunge players into a world populated by Vikings and the like, which means pillaging and, erm, the other thing that Vikings did will be the order of the day. In a rather ironic twist, the game will be published by GOD (Gathering of Developers).

Something the gaming world has clearly been waiting for since Karateka on the C-64 is an adventure fighting game. Well the wait is over, because *Oni* is almost upon us. Oni is essentially a 3D shooter that incorporates a great degree of hand-to-hand combat using specialised moves, with a female protagonist and a Manga influence. Now that can't be bad.

Strategy

Brett Robinson

Current Game Versions:

Total Annihilation: 3.1

Dark Reign: 1.4

Starcraft: 1.04

Age of Empires: 1.0b

ionhead Studios, developers of the eagerly anticipated *Black and White*, continue to impress with their innovative approach to game design. Rumour has it that they're implementing a feature which would see the game connect to a global weather server in order to determine the prevailing weather conditions in the player's locality. These conditions would then be reflected within the game itself. As a result, heavy rain outside the player's window would mean that sandbags would be the go for the denizens of Black and White. The



day/night cycle would also be replicated in this matter. How much of an effect this would actually have on gameplay remains to be seen, but it's an intriguing concept nonetheless.

ThrushWave "no feminine hygiene jokes" Technologies have unveiled their latest contribution to the strategy genre; yet another space-based 3D RTS title. *The Rift* utilises a physics-based 3D engine which will allow for large scale battles involving thousands of objects and hundreds of space craft. The player will also be able to control not only the space craft themselves, but their pilots and commanders. Promising a unique interface and 30 missions based in 30 different solar systems, it'll be interesting to see how *The Rift* shapes up to competitor titles like *Homeworld*.

Red Storm Entertainment, the geniuses behind the phenomenal Rainbow Six, are hard at work on a 3D strategy/tactical wargame called *Force 21*. Details are scarce, but RSE has enlisted the aid of Desert Storm veteran, General Fred Franks Jr as military adviser. The player will participate in a future war between US-Russian forces and China. If Rainbow Six is any indication of the quality of future titles, *Force 21* looks set to be a groundbreaking game.

At a time when excitement surrounding the impending release of *Command & Conquer 2: Tiberian Sun* has reached a crescendo, Westwood have once again announced that the game will hit stores later than originally anticipated. Barring the onset of Falcon 4.0 syndrome, *C&C2* will finally be released October.

Sims

Maj. Ian Lindgren

The good news just keeps on coming out of Russia. First we had SSI's *SU27 Flanker*, then Novologic's *MiG29*, both using Russian design teams. Now we've just discovered Maddox Games, a Russian design team based in Moscow. Maddox are designing a sim based on the venerable *IL-2 Sturmovik* ground attack fighter that was known as "Swarzer Tod" or "Black Death" to German ground troops.

Maddox are building in air and ground force interaction, and while only planning to fly the *IL-2*, they are intent on giving us six types if *IL-2s* to fly; the *IL-2* single seat, *IL-2* dual seat, *IL-2M*, *IL-2T* (torpedo bomber), *IL-2* type 3 and *IL-2I* (fighter). Cooperative multi-player options are intended and the



planned release date is October. So we still have some WWII sim development later in the year; this time with a Soviet twist, rather than UK and US versus Germany!

Also Russian, but this time a game developed by the UK firm Simis, is *Ka-52 Team Alligator*. The *Ka-52* attack helicopter is still undergoing trials and is purported to be a close match for the US Army's Apache Longbow! Simis are building in team, crew and maintenance management as part of gameplay, variable levels of complexity to suit novice players and enthusiasts, semi-dynamic real time campaigns, cooperative multi-player missions, and extensive tactical and strategic battle management. Watch this space for more on *Ka-52* as a release date becomes available.

Digital Image Design don't keep out of the news for long do they? Soon after the release of the successful *Total Air War*, DID have announced that they have commenced work on *EF2000 Version 3*! This is great news for *EF2000* fans who hope that DID maintain the feel of the original game. The game is planned for release in the final quarter of the year.

EAW pilots look out! The 6 MB 1.1 patch is out at www.micropsoft.com. Some of the improvements include 1024x768 resolution, improved ability to identify aircraft at long range, a new "wing-leveling" autopilot, increased bomb blast radius and lethality, and the damage engine has been improved to better permit gear-up landings (ditching). Apache Havoc pilots should also check out www.empireflight.com for the 1.1C patch that adds numerous additional options to the game.

Sports

Gareth Jones

The next couple of months are looking pretty positive for sports buffs - there's a host of new releases on their way out in a number of fields. First off the bat is new development company Motorsport Simulations Incorporated. Headed up by veteran online and networking programmer Bob McCarthy, MSI intends to become the pre-eminent motorsports simulations producer. They've signed a deal with the American Motorcyclist Association for a number of games based on AMA events, and announced that the first will be entitled "*AMA Superbike Championship*". Interestingly, MSI is keen to look into the viability of online-only motor-sport titles along with the usual single & multi-player combination player games.



It hasn't been a good period for Sierra lately though - they've recently had to recall every copy of *NFL Football Pro 99* because of 'errors in the program's code'. Though they should be lambasted for releasing a game as unfinished as this, Sierra representatives have been rather forward with their apologies. "I apologise...we let the impending end of the football season influence our decision process...we dropped the ball" said Sierra President David Grenewetzk. Those who have already purchased the game have been offered a full rebate along with a certificate for a free Sierra title of their choice. The team behind the fracas have been put back to work on the title, with the release of *NFL Football Pro 2000* expected in the third quarter of the year.

Other upcoming titles include Acclaim's *All Star Baseball 2000*, which is actually due out very soon now. It'll have to deal with EA's *Triple Play 2000* which is due out at around the same time, and sports a huge range of features too. Also, something that's been missing since the heady days of 1980 Skating on the C64 - a skateboarding title is in development. Activision are currently working upon '*Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*', and as senior Vice President Mitch Lasky says, 'from kick-flips to crooked grinds, the game will entice anyone who has ever dreamed of [skating professionally]'. Last, but not necessarily least, EA's *NASCAR Revolution* is in the late stages of development and looks pretty hot. Sure, you're still going to be driving around and around and around an oval track, but it'll look great!

SEVEN KINGDOMS 2

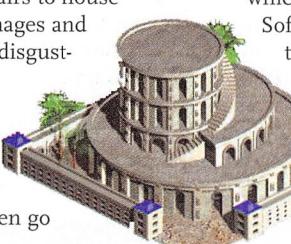
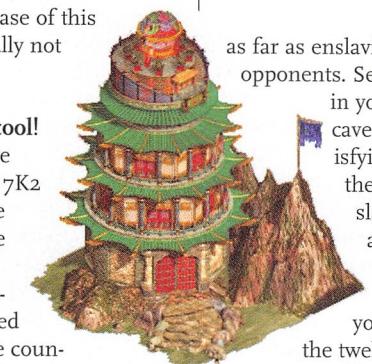
While it didn't break sales records, 7K was a most respectable effort and the sequel should achieve the recognition it deserves

Category Strategy
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Interactive Magic
Available June

Released to little or no fanfare this time last year, Seven Kingdoms was an excellent, genuine strategy game that attempted to combine the accessibility and appeal of Warcraft with the depth of Civilization. Despite garnering numerous plaudits in gaming mags worldwide - including a sterling 87% review from ourselves - it failed to sell in the numbers it probably deserved. Much like Battlezone, I guess, 7K was a game that combined two proven genres with great creative results, yet little commercial success. Real-time strategy fans snapped it up as the graphics were like Warcraft, but decided it was crap because it didn't play like Blizzard's game. Conversely, Civ players never even gave it a chance because of the way it looked. Their loss - and, with the imminent release of this sequel, hopefully not yours as well.

Slaving - it's cool!

Dubbed The Fryhtan Wars, 7K2 will see a more prominent role given to those fearsome monsters who lurked throughout the countryside in the first game. Not only can you now choose to play as a Fryhtan tribe yourself, controlling fifteen different unit types and building more sophisticated lairs to house spell-casting mages and the pleasingly disgusting-sounding Incubator (it produces weapons, apparently), but you can even go



as far as enslaving your human opponents. Set them to work in your underground caverns and gain satisfying revenge for the way they slaughtered your ancestors in the original. Of course, when you select one of the twelve human cultures, you'll also be able to capture and enslave the Fryhtans, possibly recruiting some of their tougher warriors to fight in your army. This latter option is one of the ways in which developers, Enlight Software, plan to overcome the original game's flaws.

The other is an expansion of the number of human military units to include cavalry,

ninjas, axethrowers and other culturally-specific troops.

Talky talky

Perhaps 7K's major strength was the way it de-emphasised combat as a route to victory. It was equally, if not more, important to create a prosperous economy, efficient trade routes and display tact and bravado at the diplomatic table, than it was to churn out a superior army. The sequel will continue and enhance this gameplay slant by improving the trade and diplomatic options and enlarging the array of espionage and counter-espionage choices available. Certain role-playing elements such as magic items and hero characters will feature, in a manner similar to Heroes of Might & Magic, as well as the ability to carry units between missions throughout a campaign.



The randomiser

Speaking of campaigns, a random campaign generator is promised (which should be, erm, interesting, at least) to complement the original's map generator. Cosmetic changes include a resolution upped to an eye-warming 1024x768 and a splendid and new isometric view to replace the previous forced perspective. Weather and magic effects are expected to play a major part as well.

Seven Kingdoms 2, like many sequels, is shaping up to be the game the original really should have been. Let's hope so.

David Wildgoose



A truly balanced mix of gameplay elements should lift 7K2 above the pack

BEAVIS & BUTTHEAD GO TO COLLEGE

If you're after sophisticated humour and sparkling repartee, go get bent! If you don't know what those words mean; like, hi, dumbass



Category Adventure
Players 1
Publisher GT Interactive
Available Now

Beavis and Butthead, the MTV creation that already has its own feature length film (Remember Beavis and Butthead do America? Who could forget such superlative cinema!) are now the stars of their own adventure game, Beavis and Butthead go to College. So what should we expect? What we always expect from our depraved cartoon friends: Chicks and Toilet Humour, of course. And really, who else (with the possible exception of Terrance and Phillip) does it better?

The plot is basically this: It's orientation day at the local College, and Beavis and Butthead's class are spending the day getting to know the campus. So what's there to do for our head banging compadres? A series of "get to know the college" activities, which once completed, allows access to a party, where Beavis and Butthead are positive they're gonna score with some college sluts. Think of a not-as-witty version of Monkey Island set in a suburbia with fart jokes, and you're getting close.

The graphics are true to the cartoon series, with some familiar characters making an appear-



ance, including the loser Stewart and the teaching hippy, Mr Van-Driessen. As it is now, the graphics are a little patchy, but the real worrier is the sound. There's not much of a background score, and the speech is as yet

unvoiced. Instead you get a little Butthead grunt at the start of each sentence. On top of this, the speech isn't abbreviated the second time, meaning you have to go through the whole thing again, even if you've heard it before. It really does drag the whole thing just a tad.

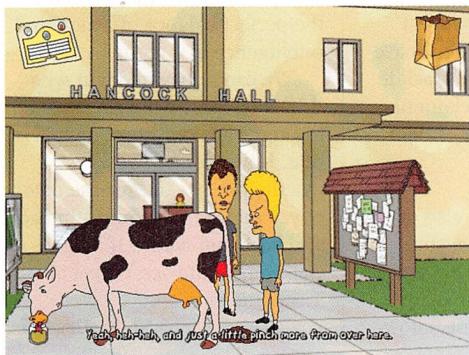
The puzzles are also a bit of a bitch, but hey, that's what you want in an adven-

ture game. They're based around the eight activities to be completed by Beavis and Butthead, each aimed to get them orientated with the campus and the programs on offer. Each

one needs to be signed off on completion, but seeing as we're dealing with possibly the two dumbest guys in cartoon history, they always manage to make it harder on themselves. They throw a total babes skirt into the trash, let a cow out of its pen, break a cello, a microphone, a plastic heart, take a ride on a library cart, and they also seem to have absolutely zero ability to jump a 1 foot high jump, or draw anything for art. But, being an adventure, these are just some of the things you need to get around.



We don't exactly understand just why we love the two B boys so, we just do.



Yeah, ha-ha-ha, and just a little... um... more from over here.

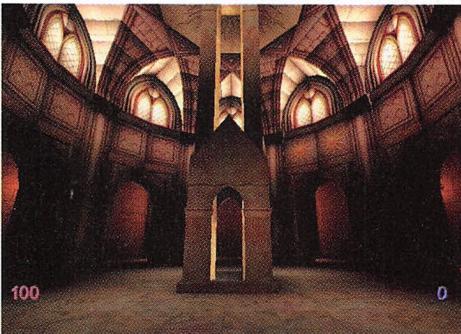
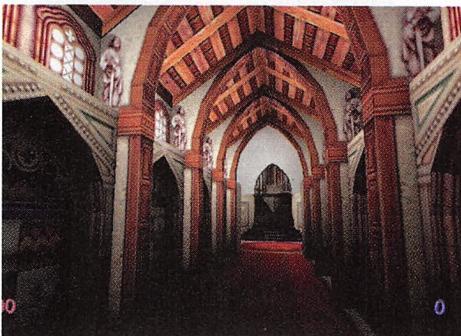
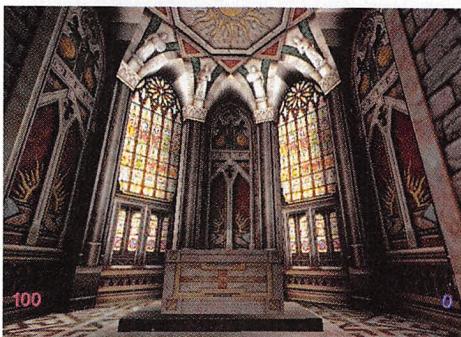
If you are yourself, or you know any die hard Beavis and Butthead fans, then you won't be disappointed. Plenty of jokes about taking dumps and calling each other "Fartknocker" and "Dumbass". If, however, this is not quite your cup of tea, you should probably run away screaming at the first sign of anyone in an AC/DC shirt. But that'd be your loss.

WHEEL OF TIME

Glorious visuals, more than your average action game action, and a strong storyline suggest that this might be the next big thing. Dammit, we want it now!

Category Fantasy action/
Strategy
Players 1-4 (TCP/IP, IPX)
Publisher Legend
Entertainment
Available Mid 1999

Can it be true? Are we returning to the days of great gaming concepts? I really hope so. Perhaps the days of the first person shooter with lots of firepower but not much else, are over. In Half-Life we saw a narrative-driven action game, with twists and turns beyond the various corridors of the research facility. Thief: The Dark Project has also expanded the horizon of 3D action, to include sneaking and theft. Soon, we will have Wheel of Time, a fantasy action game based on Robert Jordan's series of the same name. The game



includes elements of first person action, planning and construction, as well as general strategy. This caused a huge fuss at E3 and it just goes to show that Wheel of Time is like nothing previously seen and could be a most incredible game.

Steal the seal

The story takes place before the Eye of the World, the first Wheel of Time novel, so the developers could have greater control over its direction. Apparently, Robert Jordan is in consultation with the developers about the game, so that the mood can remain true to his concept. As for the game's narrative, long ago in the Age of Legends, Mankind loosed the Dark One into the world. He was subsequently imprisoned again and now many years later, the seals that bind him have come

under the control of four individuals. In the single player mission, you are Elayna Sedai, the Keeper of the Chronicles of the White Tower, and you control one of the seals. Your three opponents each control one of the other seals. There is a strong narrative in the game and as Elayna, you will uncover the motivations of the various other major characters. The Wheel of Time unfolds as the various forces struggle to gain possession of all of the seals; some to free the Dark One again, others to see he never escapes. The multiplayer game allows you to choose one of the four seal holders and attempt to gain control of all the seals for victory.

It's Unreal (mkII)

A major strength in this game is the use of a modified



Unreal engine, which will deliver visuals reportedly superior to the screen shots shown here - pretty impressive stuff. You will be able to wander around Unreal-style, making use of powerful magic in your efforts to wrest the seals from your opponents grasp, whether in the single player or multiplayer games. We can only hope it is modified enough to clear up the multiplayer headaches that Unreal offered. Don't fret, all reports suggest that Legend Entertainment have this in mind and are on track to make the multiplayer element a major part of Wheel of Time.

Strategy? Strategy!

Wheel of Time will also offer the chance to customise your own citadel in defense of your seal. The Citadel Editor is an integral part of the game, allow-

ing you to decide the best defensive design for your citadel, where you will conceal your seal, where you will place traps and even traps for the unwary! Bear in mind that your opponents have exactly the same opportunities, so when you try to steal another's seal, you could come face-to-face with some devilish traps yourself. This strong strategic side, as well as the action of first person movement could be the perfect balance of action and intelligence in a game.

We can only wonder at what Wheel of Time will bring, but all the signs are right for one hell of a title. Now the only worry is whether we see the release date of yet another big game slip back and back and back... If all goes well, we should see Wheel of Time mid year.

John Dewhurst

HEROES III

OF MIGHT AND MAGIC®



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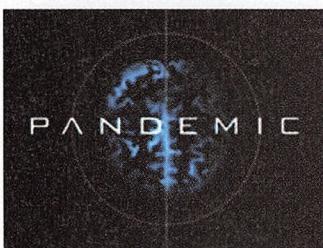
DARK REIGN II



RTS isn't dead! Though of late it does seem to be descending into the abyss of mediocrity, Dark Reign 2 might be the Phoenix that rises from the ashes

Category Real time 3D strategy

Players 1-TBA (possibly 32)
Publisher Pandemic Studios
Available Late '99



The original Dark Reign was a hugely anticipated game, especially from Australian quarters. It was, after all, the brainchild of Queensland-based development company 'Auran', and it boasted a set of features that, if not particularly revolutionary, were definitely at the cutting edge of RTS games at the time. The end product was great, and there are still plenty of web pages, fan sites, and online

leagues devoted to the game. Unfortunately, despite the marketing muscle of publishers Activision, there were a couple of other high profile RTS releases .



at around roughly the same time - Total Annihilation and Red Alert, for example. Despite DR's (at the time) relatively ground breaking feature set for an RTS,



Can true 3D offer much in the way of gameplay improvements though? Well, it looks pretty good so far

with easily customisable units and gameplay parameters, it was decided by many gamers and gaming press as being not to quite the same standard as the competitors. Sales of the game reflected this - though they were by no means poor, neither was Dark Reign hovering at the top of software bestsellers lists for very long. As any of the current fans of Dark Reign will attest, it wasn't a game that provided such an immediate 'hook' as the other two, though the depth and balance of DR would, over time, grab a gamer by the goolies and keep them coming back for more and more.

Aussie Aussie Aussie!

The sequel, imaginatively named Dark Reign 2, isn't being produced, engineered, or conceptualised by the lads from Auran - they've moved on to producing games based on the Harn universe, though a couple of staff from Auran have made the move across the Pacific to Activision, and then on to Activision's splinter company (of sorts), Pandemic. And it's Pandemic that, happily enough, are developing Dark Reign 2. So, even though it's not coming from an Australian-based company, there are still Australian hands and minds at work on the sequel - 4 Aussies were on the DR2 team at last count. Makes you positively blush with pride, dunnit? Anyway, that's enough background, let's get on to the real meat in this sandwich, shall we?

Three-D

"At its core, DR2 is a traditional real-time strategy game



just like Dark Reign", says DR2's director, Greg Borrud. But this doesn't mean that DR2 is going to be a rehash cash-in with a few token new units splashed here and there. If what the team are saying is true, then DR2 will be nothing short of a new paradigm in RTS games. They've gone for 3D this time around; units, buildings, craft - even trees and surrounding vegetation, all in 3D! And though it's nothing completely new, the viewpoint will be totally free floating and user controlled. Yes, just like Myth. Well, sort of like Myth - you'll be able to scroll upwards to a much higher degree, but you get the idea. The engine for the game itself is a combination of

points), and BattleZone and Heavy Gear 2's engines for 3D rendering and so on. The end result is a game that looks rather special - zooming down to ground level to watch a fight with your grunts, then popping back up to cloud level to oversee the movement of your heavy artillery into position on a mountain is very cool.

Smart units, finally

Pandemic have been working hard on the AI for both friendly and opposition units, which is one of the greatest hurdles yet to be overcome by RTS programmers. Many a game has been spoiled by units that get stuck on bridges, or harvesters that take an incredibly long route through heavily defended enemy territory to get back to base, and so on. The talk this time is of 'squad level AI', where units that are grouped together will actually work with and respond to units near them, and also work towards a common goal (decided by you) constructively with each other. The details are unclear at the moment as to just how this will work, but it certainly does sound impressive, and it's nice to see this area being seriously addressed. DR's units could be set with a number of variables for how they acted in combat, and this interface worked well, but Pandemic are working to improve both the level of detail (for damage responses, waypoints,

patrolling, and so on) as well as the ease of use for the system.

Gettin' paid

The resource system has been revamped totally because, as Josh Resnick says, the whole concept of mining minerals, or water, or spice and then exchanging it for money has really become a bit passe (and we agree!). He won't be drawn on just what methodology will be used for money or materials, however, other than to say that it will be different to the usual. One thing that isn't particularly different about the game is that it will include a mission, scenario and unit editor out of the box, and third party modifications and such will be encouraged and supported. As is common nowadays, the editors have been designed to be both simple and accessible to newcomers whilst retaining the power for experienced and proficient users. The 'Quake style' features don't stop there - DR2 should allow for the sharing of maps, custom decals, new units, and so on during multiplayer games, which should streamline the process for playing online quite a bit.

The day of the RTS as king of all genres might be on the decline, but this might well be largely due to the proliferation of crap rip-off clones. DR2 should hopefully help to change all this, it looks fresh, exciting, interesting - and most of all fun. Bring it on!



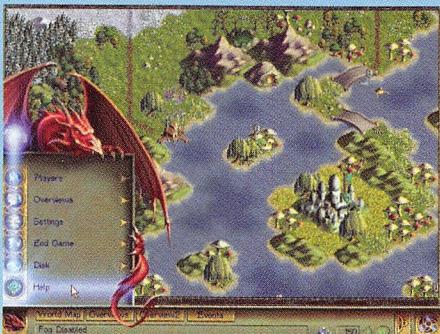
Age of Wonders

Category Turn based strategy
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Epic Megagames
Available 2nd Qtr '99

Ah, the wonderful world of fantasy turn based strategy. Elves gambolling about with their funny pointed ears, stocky dwarves industriously hitting things with their hammers, the undead hordes stumbling about saying 'aaargh' all the time. Lovely! It was lovely in the Warlords series, one of the best fantasy TBS series ever, and obviously the people at Kolbitar development house agree, because Age Of Wonders seems to bear a startling resemblance to Warlords.

This is not to say that AOW looks like a cheap knockoff, or that they have stolen SSI's ideas. Not at all. The look and feel of fantasy based TBS games has long been established and AOW merely looks to follow in that established path, though there are some

very impressive innovations on offer. Graphically, this looks absolutely splendid, with an isometric viewpoint (rather than the more popular top-down look) and resolutions up to 1024x768 offering some stunning artwork in both the landscape and icons. The storyline is fairly long and involved, as per usual in fantasy adventures, and features the different types of creatures (elves, halflings, dwarves, the undead, etc) pitted in battle, along with a smattering of wandering heroes that can be picked up along the way.



The battle mechanics are interesting, in that they are a meld of two of the more popular styles. Players will be able to choose from the Warlords-like logarithm based engine that just decides the battles for you, or the HOMM-inspired turn based individual attacks for members of your party. It's a move sure to please most people interested in this genre, as will the lovely animations for units

Yes indeed, it truly was the Age of Wonders. Elves, Dwarves, Skeletons, halflings, and so on. It's wondrous how the whole fantasy theme has never become stale and silly. Really.

in the battles. On top of this, things such as siege towers and catapults will be necessary for attacks on castles to break down walls and such-like.

As you would expect, you will be able to multiplay AOW in pretty much every available form, and in a nice touch a map and scenario editor will be included with every copy.

Prince Naseem Boxing

Category Boxing sim
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Codemasters
Available 2nd Qtr '99

Ah, the noble art of getting paid about 16 million dollars to be used and abused by a man with hair higher than Elaine so that you end up like a wino who's imbibed one too many bottles of Drano. So noble,

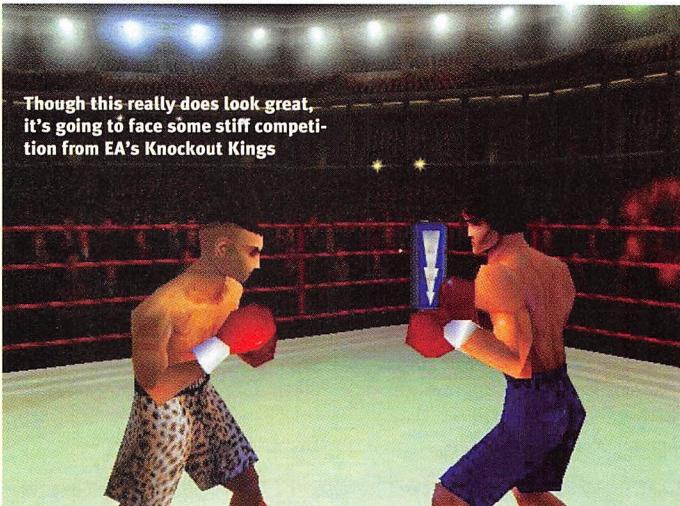
so beautiful. But no, Codemasters have a most excellent pedigree, so when you hear that they're in the midst of developing Prince Naseem Boxing, you'd have to feel confident that they're going to bring out the best in this most noble of blood sports.

Prince Naseem himself has plenty of respect in the modern boxing world. Not only does he

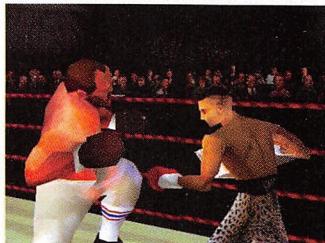
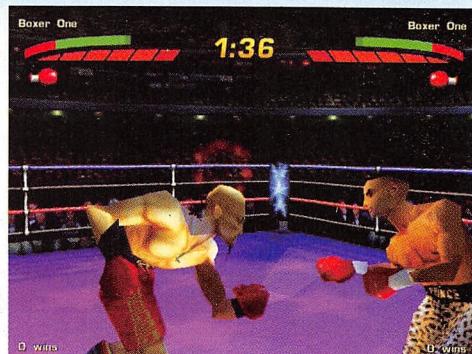
win a lot (31 fights, 31 wins, 28 knockouts), but he also is gifted with the understatement of a WCW Wrestler. Codemasters, it seems, are determined to do the WBO Featherweight champion justice, and the game does look to have some pretty impressive features. Of perhaps premier importance is the control responsiveness - it will be incredibly slick and fast, as is necessary for a sim of this nature. Snappy punches, blocks, guards, feints and ear bites will be flying from all directions, they say. Well, maybe not the ear bites. With each boxer comprised of an 800 polygon wire frame, and around 8 frames of animation for each punch, it's not going to look too bad either.

Along with the Prince, there's 15 other boxers to play as or against, both in 'versus mode' and 'Showcase' (or the world

championship mode), and venues will cover the entire world, including stadiums in Japan, Las Vegas, LA, Russia, Germany, and the UK. And interestingly, there will also be a management feature, where you guide your chosen boxer through his career, Don King style. It's been given the rather unfortunate name of 'Boxergotchi', but hopefully it will be a lot more fun than the name suggests. More soon.



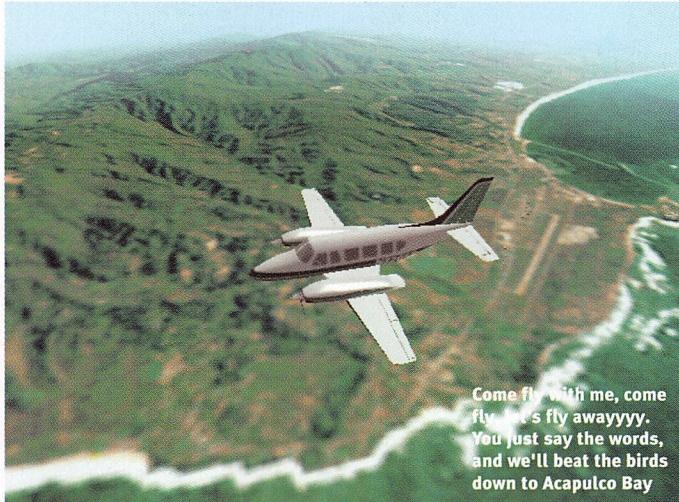
Though this really does look great, it's going to face some stiff competition from EA's Knockout Kings



Fly!

Category Flight sim
Players 1-8 (at least)
Publisher Terminal Reality
Available 2nd Qtr 99

Combat flight sims, these days, are a dime a dozen. After a waiting period of up to three years for certain sims, over the past few months there's been a glut of combat oriented flight sims. The straight-up flight sim genre has taken a back seat to combat sims of late though, and there's really only three companies that have felt the need to pump them out overall - Microsoft, Sierra and Looking Glass.



Come fly with me, come fly with me, it's fly awayyyy. You just say the words, and we'll beat the birds down to Acapulco Bay

Enter Terminal Reality, who are about to make their debut in the genre with 'Fly!' (Terminal Velocity & Hellbender don't count, cos they were crap). The

TR team have been working on Fly! For a good three years now, and they're feeling confident that the end product will be worth the wait. One of the standout features of Fly! is the cockpit which, for each of the five aircraft offered in the initial release, will be exactly like the real thing. Every

knob, switch, radio stack, and so on in the real aircraft will be in Fly!'s craft, and it will all be functional. Also, flight across the entire world will be possible, though areas around the US will have the most detail. Other features include voice communication with ATC and other aircraft, weather variables that really affect flight models and VFR navigation, and built in microphone communication with up to 7 other flyers in multiplayer games.

With five aircraft to fly in the initial release (a single-engined Cessna and Prop, dual prop



Piper and Beechcraft, and the Cessna Citation jet), along with some stunning visuals thanks to 3D hardware support (along with a software mode too), Fly! Might just have what it takes to topple MS as the pre-eminent Flight Simulator creator.

Hidden and Dangerous

Category Squad tactical combat
Players 1-4
Publisher TBA
Available 3rd Qtr '99

The success of Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines was a surprise to many in the industry. It was, undoubtably, a very good game, but as it didn't fall into the middle of the more 'established' genres, it wasn't expected to 'sell a bomb' (that's the technical term), which it did. We loved it, and plenty of you out there did too, so you'll no doubt be pleased to learn that another game with the same kind of features in development. Hidden and Dangerous does follow the strategical placement and manoeuvring of a small group of allied units behind enemy lines, though not necessarily from the top-down perspective. H&D will feature a free floating camera, so an overall top down view will be available, but players will also be able to move down to 'street

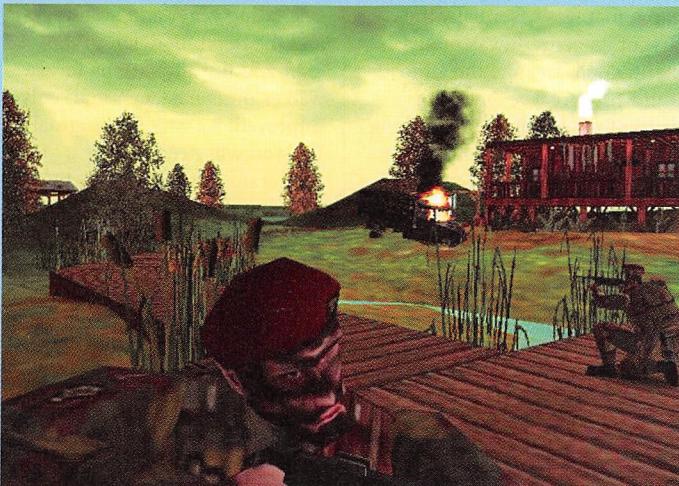
level' to watch the action up close and person too.

Though we haven't managed to get our hands on a working version of the game just yet (developers Illusions don't seem to have secured a publisher at present), the screenshots do look rather nice. The final game will support D3D, and uses a proprietary true-3D engine that supports resolutions up to 1024x768, all in high colour mode. Nice!

Also, you'll be guiding your troops through vaguely historically accurate missions - they have apparently been designed according to how veterans explained them to developers! Interestingly, you will only initially have a few commands available to you, but as your troops progress through the missions they will gain in skills and



Yes yes! More squad based tactical action. Love it! Bring it on! Please God, let it be good!



abilities, such as being able to drive the jeeps, side-cars, tanks, and other armoured vehicles scattered about the place. In total, there will be 24 missions over 6 'scenes', with the player forced to make choices about which 'path' of the storyline to take to move from level to level. Great visuals, a very interesting plot, and quite possibly some great gameplay too - this is one we'll be keeping an eye on for certain!





BATTLEZONE 2

Category Real time action/strategy
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Activision
Available 3rd Qtr '99

Almost a year ago that BattleZone was released, and the whole episode was kind of strange. Partly the reason was because many people seemed to know about the age-old arcade game called BattleZone, and knew that Activision were making an 'update' of this ray-traced tank shooting game. As a result, it took a while for word to filter through that Activision had changed almost everything to do with the game except for the name. Upon release, BattleZone gained appreciation from all

quarters, including print and online gaming press (including us) for the innovative new style of play that the game promoted - a kind of mix between first person action and the traditional top-down RTS strategies.

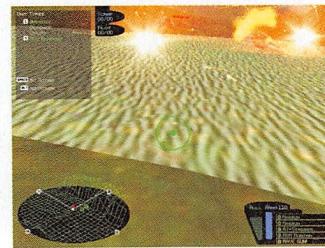
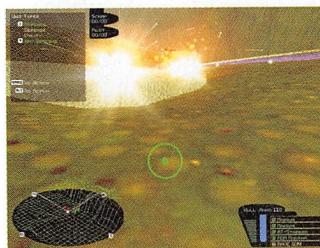
It wasn't a perfect game, and anyone that stuck with it for a decent amount of time was made painfully aware of the inadequacies of combat control over your wingmen as well as creating and maintaining a productive base whilst waging war. Still, for a game that was essentially the first of its genre it was pretty damn good. Despite the almost uniformly great reviews and word of mouth that spread about BZ, apparently the game didn't sell all that well. BZ seems to have largely ended up as a niche

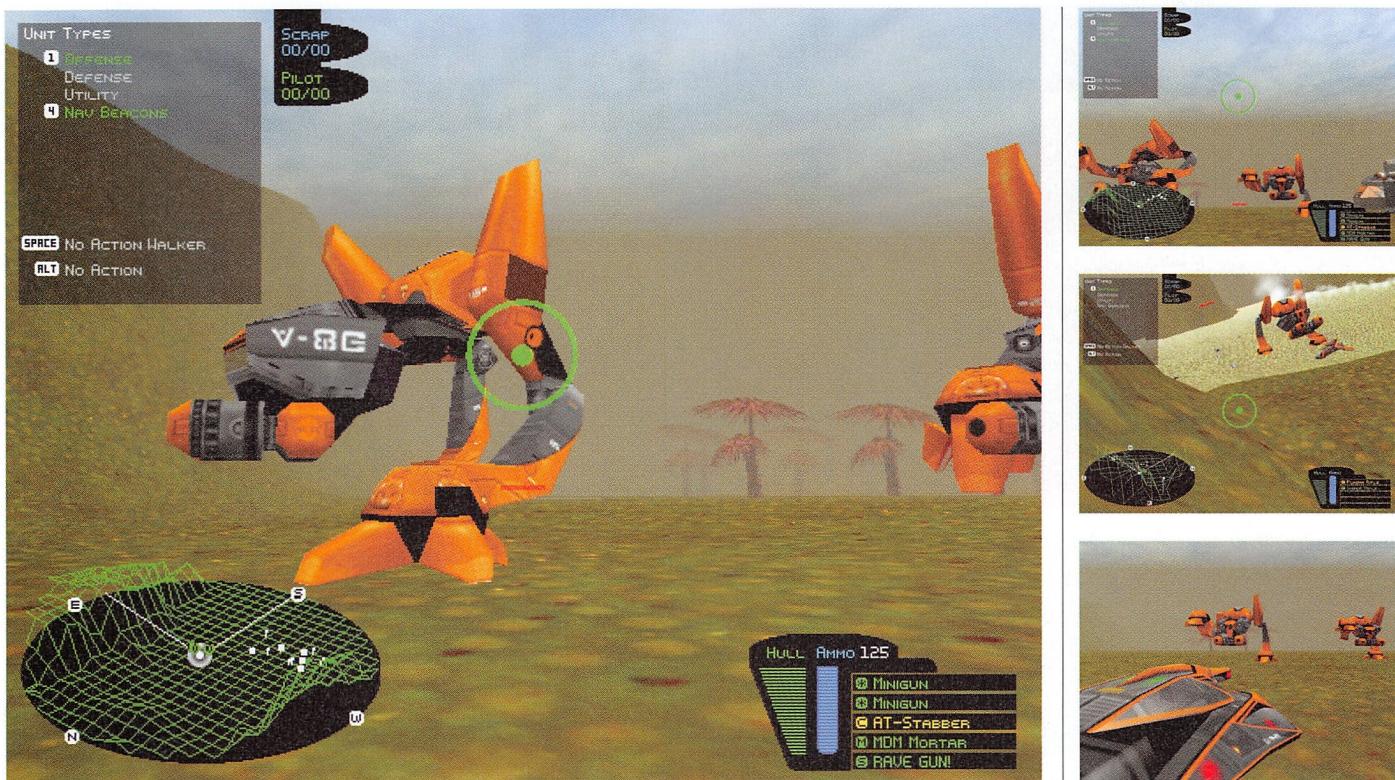
game, with a dedicated but comparatively small number of followers - the number of fan sites still up now attests to this. The sequel, we sincerely hope, won't be relegated to the same 'niche' status, because it really looks to have the goods to make it what ever-hopeful publicists like to call a 'Triple-A title'.

To begin with, BZ2 looks absolutely fantastic. The explosions are wonderfully excessive, the terrain is heavily detailed with a variety of discrete surfaces (including water and swamps), and the depth of detail in the craft and the animations for the walker units has been markedly improved. As with the original BZ, you will need to have a 3D accelerator card to be able to play, but developers Pandemic

Studios have opted to include DirectX support so that any and every DirectX compatible accelerator will work with the game. They are also, at the time of going to press, investigating the possibilities of adding in Glide support, as well as investigating other API's for inclusion as well, but DirectX will definitely be supported, as will Aureal's A3D technology.

Newly formed development house Pandemic Studios have been tasked with the production of BZ 2, even though BZ was an in-house production. Pandemic Studios, however, was formed by Josh Resnick and Andrew Goldman, two of Activision's highest profile names - Resnick was in charge of MechWarrior 2, and Goldman with Dark Reign.

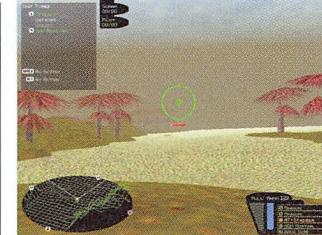




They left Activision because they felt that the company was becoming too large and corporatised, but Activision were still able to sign a deal with Pandemic for their first two games - Battlezone 2 and Dark Reign 2. Both Resnick and Goldman understand the importance of player interaction and input into the design and implementation process for the game, and have taken on board the comments and suggestions from BattleZone players for the sequel. As a result, we should see a more streamlined command and control interface, and (thank your chosen deity) smarter wingmen that will make decisions for themselves. One of the most annoying aspects of the original BZ was that your pack of wingmen would continue along right beside you deep into enemy territory, even though they were out of ammunition and very

badly damaged. Apparently, in BZ 2, your wingmen will be able to be told when to run away and repair, when to request more ammunition, and so on. Yes!

Also, it seems as though a research element will also be introduced, though it's not clear just how the research will take place. In actual fact, there's quite a bit that's not very clear about BZ2. Pandemic are keeping rather tight-lipped about the feature set for the game. The official site is in development at this time, but if you are thinking about heading out to the web to dig for a little info, you should definitely check out Pandemic's (sort-of) web page at www.pandemicstudios.com - this is not your average corporate game-spruiking web site. These guys are weird. They make use of strange, scary, disgusting, and highly inappropriate humour to explain the inner workings of the



development house. It's cracked, it's weird, and we love it!

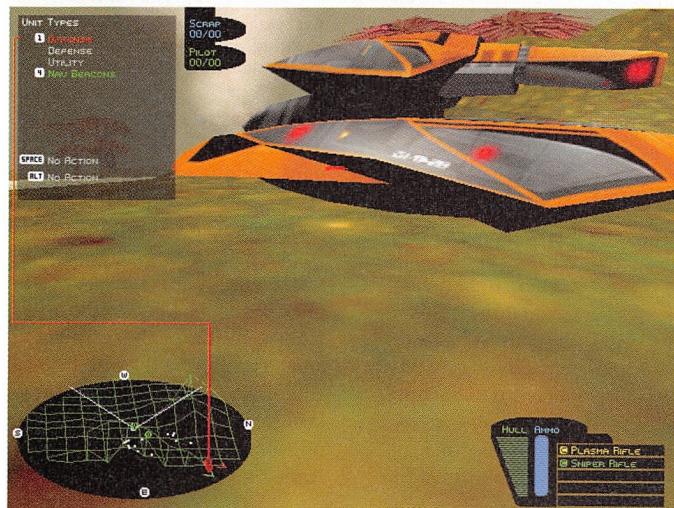
Still, the only other details that they have released regarding the game are that there will be a much greater emphasis on multiplayer aspects, including customisability, different methods of playing (CTF, King of the hill, etc), and co-op play too. In keeping with their ethos of player interaction, BZ2 will ship with a map and unit editor, designed to be accessible to newbies as well as powerful enough for the hard-core third party designers to play with.

The basics of the original BZ

The addition of Mechs to the BattleZone universe is most welcome. Bring it on!

will be retained, you will still be in a first person perspective, controlling your units through a HUD display, you will still be mining bio-metal, though as the game is set in the present day, there will be many more techniques available than sending out dumb harvesters. There will also be new resources to mine and accumulate, which will allow for a much greater array of buildings and units as a result, though there are no concrete details on new units of buildings as yet.

Will the sequel manage to garner the interest of the mainstream players, or will it remain a bit of a niche title? From what we've seen so far, we're prepared to bet that BZ2 is going to be a rather huge hit - and deservedly so.





Category RPG
Players 1-8
Publisher Delphine
Available 2nd Qtr '99

Delphine software is another of those wacky French companies that manage to consistently think outside the lines of what's considered 'normal' for computer games. They're not afraid to push back the boundaries, or put their own spin upon established genres of gaming - before Tomb Raider there was Dark Stone, and before the latest crop of Superbike sims there was

There haven't been many games 'inspired' by Diablo's success, strangely. But this looks great!

Moto Racer, for example. They've now decided to try their hand at a dungeon hack RPG, so you'd have to be hopeful that there's going to be enough new material for it to be refreshingly new and innovative, given their pedigree.

The similarities to Diablo/D2 cannot be ignored, but Dark Earth doesn't really look like a rip-off (though the inventory screens do look very similar). You will be asked, as the main quest, to journey down 32 levels

Dark Stone

of dungeons so as to eventually destroy the big bad guy, with a host of subquests given to you by the townspeople above to keep you occupied. However, whether in single or multiplayer, you won't be alone. There will be a total of eight characters to choose from - Warrior/Amazon, Wizard/Sorcerer, Assassin/Rogue, and Monk/Priest. There's only four character classes, really, but a male and female version of each. You'll be in control of multiple characters at one time (probably only a maximum of two at once), though your party can be comprised of up to 7 others, with those not on the immediate quest just hanging out at the Inn until you call upon them.

The graphics do look splendid indeed, with the full spectrum of 3D accelerated features being put to good use - in fact you'll need a Direct3D compliant card to play, but it will be worth it. The monsters are more than just your average

'stumble blindly towards their prey' variety, Delphine are saying that they'll work together to outflank you, make feints, and withdraw to easily defendable territory - tops, eh?

With support for up to 8 players on Lan or Internet, multiplayer should be a hoot, though there's no word on a set of dedicated servers a'la Battle.net as yet.



Imperialism II

Category Turn based strategy
Players 1-6
Publisher SSI
Available 2nd Qtr '99

Imperialism II, obviously enough the sequel to Imperialism, is sure to bring out the bastard in us all once again. It's one of those delightful games that allows the player to positively revel in their backstabbing ways, to enjoy enslaving newly discovered nations (or possibly even destroying them entirely, if struck by a whim), to make (and break) trade treaties or non aggression pacts, to spread lies and disinformation about your adversaries to others, and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Though bastardry in all its forms does tend to play large part in these types of games, there's also plenty of other features to keep you occupied. Can't be bothered weaving an elaborate web of intrigue and lies? No problem! Just saddle up with a group of any

of the 40 naval, military, or civilian units, and go wreak some havoc, military style. Or perhaps you prefer to investigate the scientific advances of the Renaissance period - with a technology tree with around 100 discoveries to make, your scientists will be kept



busy as they research hurriedly to get ahead of your rivals. If you do manage to keep your allies happy and not invade them for any length of time, you'll also be able to make use of a detailed and extensive trade and diplomacy setup. If all that fails though, unlike the original Imperialism, the combat battle system should give plenty of control. This time you'll be able to choose the order in which your units fire

backstabbing, skulduggery, lying, cheating, and generally behaving like a politician. Now this we like!

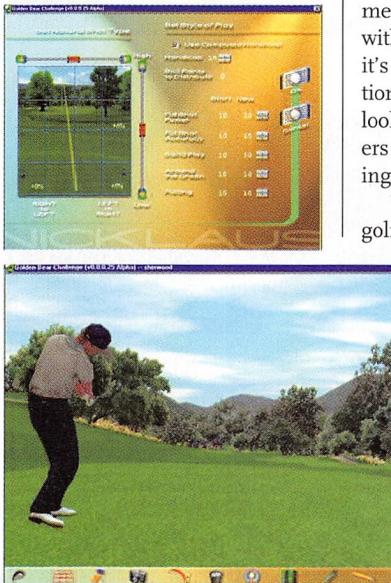
or move, as will your competitors, which should make for some more realistic battles.

With a period covering around 300 years (from 1500 to 1800), Imperialism 2 looks as though it might fulfil the requirements of a great sequel - taking on the best parts of the original, improving and streamlining the interface, adding enough new elements to keep veterans happy, and keeping up with modern technology. Review soon.

Golden Bear Challenge

Category Golf sim
Players 1-TBA
Publisher Activision
Available 2nd Qtr 99

Golf games are a dime a dozen nowadays, and to tell the honest truth there's just not that much between them.



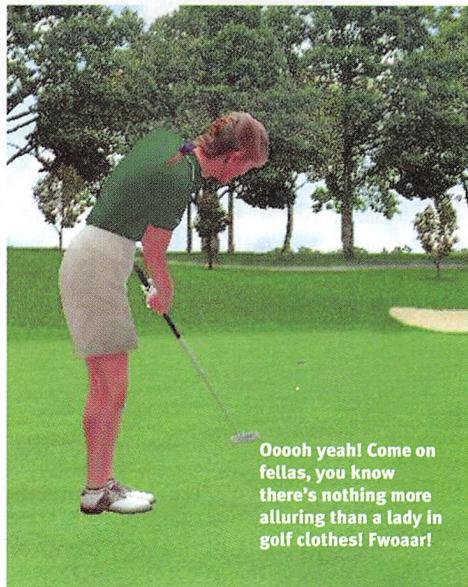
There seemed to be a fairly standard formula at work - get big golf name to endorse your product, accurately model a few big name golf courses, some photo-realistic graphics, throw in a couple of soothingly-voiced commentators, maybe a course designer, and possibly even a 'true swing' method and you're right on a par with the current crop. However, it's high time for some innovation in the golf sim genre - and it looks like Activision, and developers Hypnos Interactive are willing to give it a go.

What else can you do with a golf game though - they're already quite realistic as it is! Well, how about some role-playing elements as well? Role Playing! What the hell, right? Well, not role playing like D&D, but a series of attributes for your golfer, with points to allocate for power, putting ability, chipping, and so on, you'll actually

be forced to be weak in some areas while strong in others, just like in real life golf.

This won't mean that you'll absolutely suck in certain areas, rather that things will be just a little tougher to master - and the reverse will apply to areas of strength, too. For instance, if you choose high attributes in your clubbing capabilities, then you'll be able to 'beat the snot out of the ball' - but only if you hit the three click power meter correctly. And you will be using the three click method rather than the now more fashionable 'true swing' method - that will be the only option available.

Apart from this curious anomaly (though I don't actually know anyone that prefers 'true swing'), you'll have the usual array of standard features - play as or against



Ooooh yeah! Come on fellas, you know there's nothing more alluring than a lady in golf clothes! Fwoaar!



the Bear himself, beautiful 3D accelerated graphics, 6 high profile golf courses, atrocious fashions, the usual modes of play, and all the other little bits and bobs.

Warzone 2100

Category Real Time Strategy
Players 1-8
Publisher Eidos
Available 2nd Qtr '99

Well, yes, ok, it is yet another RTS game. No! Wait! Come back, don't turn the page just yet! This one isn't a cheap knock-off to make some cash. Or at least it doesn't look like one, at any rate. Developers Pumpkin Studios do have the courage to try a few new things, and the result just might be good enough to have you put aside all your RTS overkill-angst.

As is becoming commonplace with next-generation RTS games, Warzone 2100 will feature a fully 3D environment, and a fully rotatable camera to view the action. The storyline is rather pedestrian, but it suffices to set the scene - post apocalyptic environment, bands of humans gather together, begin fighting, only one can survive. Enough about that. What does sound exciting, though, is the amount of units

you will be able to choose from - around 2000! Also, you'll be able to set and modify units to your liking, which should ensure a great deal of variety in multiplayer games, choosing from armour strengths, engines, weapons loadouts, body styles, and so on.

You should have a good deal of control over your units too, with a setup such that you'll be able to tell them which order to attack with (e.g. Take out defensive structures first, then weapons factory, barracks, etc). Add this to a very nice looking waypoint system using markers rather than lines, and multiple options for actions to take once the waypoint has been reached (guard, patrol, harvest then return to base, etc), and units will also gain in their combat rating if they survive the battle, from novice to hero. Most interestingly of all, the single player game will be split into



scenarios, which will be in turn divided into individual missions. However, once you finish a mission the next will begin with your current base in the same condition you left it, and the



No, wait, come back! Read the preview - this isn't just another knock off RTS clone. Well, probably, anyway.

same complement of units, all the way through each scenario - the map will just expand as the scenario evolves. Sounds good, doesn't it? More soon.



THE SCORE

THREE YEARS OF BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS... ALL IN TWO PAGES

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YOUR NAME IS "MALACHI."
THAT'S ANCIENT HEBREW FOR
BAD ASS MOTHER



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AVENGING ANGEL™

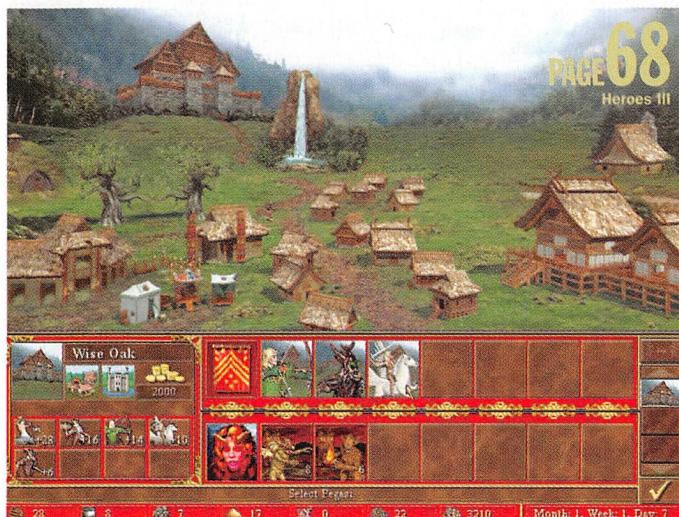
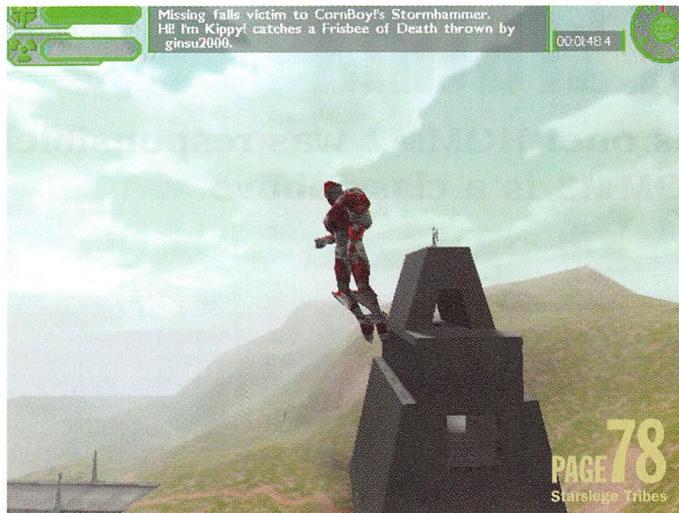
Cyclone
STUDIOS
3DO™



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Quake under Siege?

In between the next few months of heavy Heroes of Might and Magic III playing and intense Sim City civic planning, we anxiously look forward to seeing just how well Starsiege Tribes goes down on the net.

Yes indeedy, FPS deathmatching is up there with the greatest things ever, but there are more than a few of us getting slightly tired of running up and down brown corridors. Tribes gives us massive outdoor environments and asks for a whole new approach to combat. So many

new tactical elements appear for the first time in the stunner of a game. A tasty example are the flying troop carriers. Combined arms assaults with big teams - oh yeah!

While it's a rich haul of games this month, the most satisfied gamers out there are the RPGers - for Baldur's Gate has finally appeared! Luckily for Interplay it seems to be all that was promised and more. 3D be damned, this is pure gameplay.

Ben Mansill
Editor

THE PC POWERPLAY SCORING SYSTEM

95%+	PLATINUM The Best. Virtually faultless, reserved for games which cause loss of sleep from thinking of nothing else.
90-94%	GOLD A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre, or a ground breaking game that'll be setting trends.
80-90%	A strong, eminently playable game. Hard to fault and likely to still be on the hard drive in 6 month's time.
60-80%	Competent and generally enjoyable. Flaws or mediocrity hold these games back from higher ratings.
40-60%	Average and ordinary. Not bad, not good. Ideal gift.
0-40%	Bad, really bad. Boring, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible.

HEROES OF MIGHT &

The Restoration Of Erathia

Oh, how we've been waiting for this one! HOMM2 was responsible for many a sleepless night - and HOMM3 is a class above

Tall began in 1991, game history fans. In an innocent attempt to transfer the epic adventure of role-playing games onto a broader canvas, New World Computing designed the seminal King's Bounty. Abandoning the traditional RPG party of adventurers, Bounty instead opted for a combination featuring great heroes leading even greater armies across blood-soaked plains, forests teeming with hordes of fearsome and often unspeakable creatures, and rocky, windswept peaks littered with the remnants of vast battles. Oh, and with the added bonus of some resource management on the side. Although being for its time a superb game, it wasn't a commercial success. So we waited.

New World Bounty

Between then and 1995, the fourth and fifth episodes of New World's Might & Magic series had met with much acclaim and quite large sales figures, and in the process had established itself as a formidable franchise. Thus,



Heroes Of Might & Magic was born - taking its name and game world from the venerable Might & Magic, while its gameplay mechanics were merely an enhanced and revised edition of the old King's Bounty. Again, it was a superb game, but importantly this time it was also a hit. Of course, that meant we didn't have to wait long for Heroes 2 to arrive and, sure enough, in 1996

it did. Essentially the same game, it added enough complications and improvements (including a convenient and comprehensive map editor) to ensure its status as a classic. And as well as being yet another superb game, it managed to become a monster hit.



Truly great

All of which means we've been waiting three years for Heroes Of Might & Magic 3 - a game that is basically identical in

many ways to a decade old game. I used to play on the Amiga. Hmm, have we really come so far and yet so little at all? You see, normally I wouldn't regard

MAGIC III

Castle		Battle Dwarves		Attack 0	
Centaur Captains		Attack 0	Defense 3	Damg. 2-3	H.P. 10
Upp. Centaur Stables		# Growth 21			
Wood Elves		Attack 9	Defense 5	Damg. 3-5	H.P. 15
Homestead Available: 7		# Speed 6	# Growth 10		
Dendroid Guards		Attack 9	Defense 12	Damg. 10-14	H.P. 55
Dendroid Archers		# Speed 3	# Growth		
Green Dragons		Attack 18	Defense 18	Damg. 40-50	H.P. 180
Dragon Cliffs		# Speed 10	# Growth		
Exit Castle		Month: 1, Week: 1, Day: 1		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10	5	20	5	5	5
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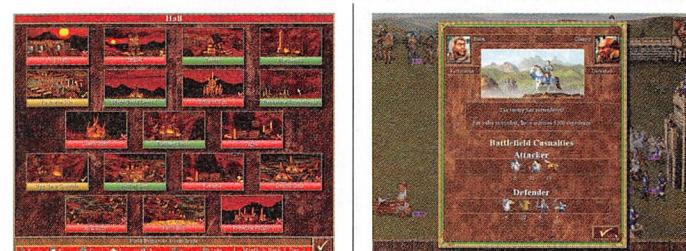
All the screens are brilliantly designed, making running the show a breeze

any game as truly great unless it breaks new ground in some way. While Heroes 3, it could be argued, is just more of the same. Oh, forget it, throw out your theories about clones and unoriginality and the rest - I know I will - Heroes 3 is simply too good to waste time worrying about things like that. I guess that explains why I'm expecting to play it more than any other game over the course of the next year.

We don't need another...

Okay, if you've never played a Heroes game, I suppose a brief explanation is in order. On most maps you'll begin with a home castle and perhaps a few heroes at your command. Inside the castle

you can build all kinds of structures - some can be visited by your hero to improve their skills (mage guilds, for instance, where they learn new spells), some are dwellings for the various creatures you can train and recruit into your army (the Homestead, say, will house wood elves), while others are for improving the fortifications and capacity of the castle itself. Each day you have the chance to march your heroes (and any army they control) around the map, claiming mines to add to your resource stockpiles, defeating monsters and other heroes in combat, and encountering the numerous locations where new skills are picked up or extra troops might be persuaded to aid your



cause. To win a scenario, you usually have to overthrow all your opponents' castles and defeat their heroes, though there are some variations like being first to find an important artifact or take a particular castle.

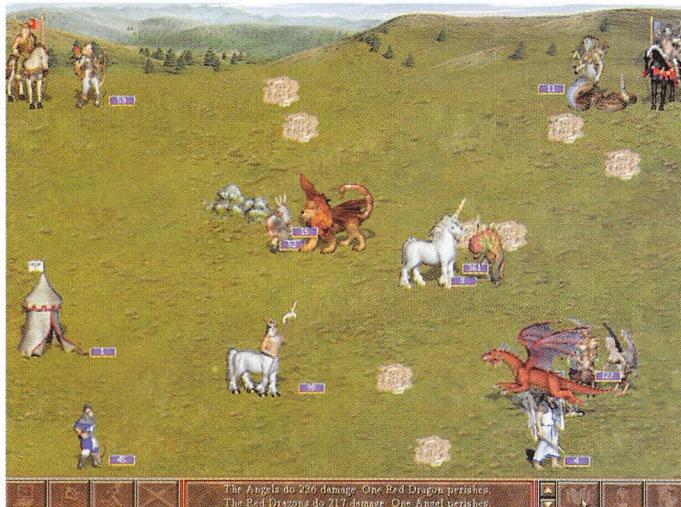
Stagger me!

That, in a nutshell, is the whole game. What separates it from the run-of-the-mill, resource management and little blokes fighting each other type games is the sheer breadth and, at times, staggering depth this unassuming and seemingly uncomplicated game has to offer. There is never any one right way to play, no sure-

Town Planners of Might & Magic

Perhaps the most impressive enhancement to be found in Heroes 3 arrives with the superlative map editor. Now ensconced firmly within a flexible and very easy to use menu-driven interface (which is truly remarkable, when you consider how user-friendly the Heroes 2 editor was), creating your own scenarios is an absolute delight. There are no more awkward restrictions enforced upon where you can or cannot place bits of terrain. There's a heaven-sent overlay that tells you which squares are occupied or blocked by certain creatures and objects. There are menus to specify precisely which structures can be built in each castle. There are... oh, just loads of useful stuff that makes your town planning life so much simpler.





The secret nude beach volleyball sub-game. Well, ok, not really. But wouldn't that be cool?

place and economy, ultimately boils down to trying to find a style of play that suits you. It's a cliche, I know, but Heroes 3 really is the sort of game for which you'll still be discovering new and better strategies ten to twelve months after you buy it. This is one game you'll never be able to play to death.

Good, neutral, or evil

Speaking of new stuff, let's see precisely what Heroes 3 is actually providing us with. For a start, there are now six campaigns, divided into three groups - Good, Evil and Neutral. The first sees Queen Catherine arriving home to find her homeland of Erathia in turmoil following the death of her father. Playing as Knights and Clerics under the banner of Good, it's your task to restore Erathia to its former glories - hence the subtitle Restoration Of Erathia. Of

course, the Evil player sees events in a rather different light. Here, with Catherine's father gone, you raise an army of demons and devils to try to seize Erathia for yourself. And in the Neutral corner, you take on the role of mercenary, seeking riches and reward from whoever pays the better. Incidentally, the first map of this campaign introduces one of the new conditions for victory - that is, owning all the mines on the map.

Ingham in the Castle

Stand alone scenarios have been revamped as well, now allowing for up to eight players (either human or computer) to participate. To accommodate eight different players, there has been some major tinkering to the range of hero and castle types. There are now eight castles - the Rampart, Necropolis, Inferno, Dungeon, Tower, Stronghold, Fortress, and (somewhat confusingly) the Castle - each of which boasts two native hero types - a warrior and a spell-caster. For example, the Ranger and Druid are native to the Rampart and thus have innate special abilities that generally take advantage of what their castle type has to offer. To give a more detailed example, Ingham the Cleric, a native of the Castle, confers an attack bonus to any monks (who are likewise natives of the Castle) he may have in his army.

Vive la difference!

These new castle types also have new methods of construction, as well as many



Dungeon's Artifact Merchant - a marketplace addition that allows the purchase of artifacts; the Skeleton Transformer - a Necropolis structure that lets you turn any creature into a skeleton; the Rampart's Treasury - which gives you 10% interest on any gold you have at the start of each week; and the Glyphs Of Fear - that adds a +2 defence bonus to any hero stationed in the garrison of your Fortress. As you can see, the structures vary considerably, depending on the type of castle. Compared to Heroes 2, the castles are more distinctive,



Let's Just Be Friends, Okay?

An element that was never fully exploited properly in Heroes 2 was that of alliances. In fact, they were really no more than gentlemen's agreements not to attack each other.

Excellent, in Heroes 3 they offer so much more. Allies can see every inch of territory their companions have explored, visit any friendly castle to rest, learn spells or defend it, and even trade troops and artifacts between heroes and resources at the marketplace.

PLUS+



Welcome to the Astral Wizard's Heroes Of Might And Magic 3 site!

If you are new please check out the "Welcome To Heroes 3" page which will introduce you to the game and its features. If you are a regular visitor, please click on the "Tutor Station" and "FAQs" sections to see what's new.

Members of the UK's Internet Strategy and Tactics Association.

Member of the UK's Internet Strategy and Tactics Association.

Member of the UK's Internet Strategy and Tactics Association.

Over the next few months, the finest HOMM site known to man, The Astral Wizard, will surely be swamped by more tips, tactics and customised maps than even a Hydra could cope with. Check out its murky depths at <http://www.astral-wizard.com>.

thus adding immeasurably to the strategy of playing as or against each type.

A few good Heroes

Heroes themselves have been differentiated to a greater degree. Besides the unique, innate abilities they each possess, the number of secondary skills they can learn has doubled. Useful stuff like Tactics, Magic Resistance, First Aid and Offense, all mean that your heroes can be specialised far more than ever before. Exacerbating this is the fact that artifacts now must be

equipped by each hero, restricting them to one sword, shield, necklace, etc, each. Though they can still carry unequipped items, of course. Thus, the old Heroes 2 strategy of just having one superhero to do all your fighting is untenable here. You'll need to pick the right man or woman for each job.

Tactics!

Combat has also undergone some extensive upheavals. Immediately noticeable is the larger size of the battlefield, increased by nearly 50% and

A hero ventures forth to battle mighty beasts. This is no walk in the park

enabling each hero to carry up to seven different troop types in their army. A more significant change, though, concerns the use of initiative in giving faster creatures more choice as to when they attack. Each round of combat is split into two - during the first half, creatures take turns from fastest to slowest then vice versa in the second half. Instead of attacking or moving your Archangels, say, you can opt to wait until the very end of the combat round, thus allowing you two attacks in succession with little retaliation. Many creatures now also have more special abilities, ranging from being able to cast spells (Ogre Magi can cast Bloodlust) to doing double damage (Dread Knights) or draining opposing heroes' spell points (Wights). Overall, the changes to combat make for a far more tactical battle. Judicious use of spells is crucial and greater attention must be paid to each creature's remaining hit points rather than just the number of units.

Udderly magnificent

Perhaps the most compelling reason I could find as to why Heroes 3 is such a fantastic game - and why it thoroughly deserves a place in everyone's collection - came when I loaded up Heroes 2 after spending a week or so with its successor. What was once a deep, complex and addictive game now felt shallow, superficial and fairly monotonous. Any game that can do that to one as fine as Heroes 2 must be doing something right. To put it as simply as I can, Heroes Of Might & Magic 3 is utterly magnificent.

David Wildgoose



GOLD

94%

Category	Strategy
Players	1-8 (Hotseat, TCP/IP, IPX, Modem)
Publisher	Sirtech
Price	\$89.95
Rating	TBA
Available	Now

For Unparalleled depth of strategy. Greater variety of heroes, creatures and castles makes for a unique experience each time you play the same map. Beautiful music and gorgeous hi-res graphics add so much to the atmosphere. Much better computer AI means a stern challenge for even veteran Heroes 2 players, yet the accessibility makes for a game anyone can play. A sophisticated map editor allows for more intricately designed maps with stories and side-quests.

Against The added complications means that games take longer than they used, especially multi-player games.

Need P133, 32MB RAM, 4xCD, Windows 9x

Want P200

SIMCITY 3000

How sad that Sydney's Year 2000 city planners didn't get the chance to play this before they "beautified" it. They might have actually done a decent job!

Gamers really are quite slippery fish. There's no telling what kind of games they will take to. Give 'em games with guns - that's a safe bet; give 'em games with sports - someone'll buy it. But give 'em a game with budgets, power plants, zoning, industry and commerce, and you might as well send your clothes to the poor house this afternoon, right? Wrong!

Origi-what?

SimCity, the city planning game, a genuinely original idea, was a huge hit for Maxis in the early 1990s. From the heritage of Civilisation and Railroad Tycoon, SimCity again proved that people liked to think and play at the same time. Revolutionary stuff, yes? In recent years we've seen the likes of SimSafari and SimTower but everyone was really waiting for this one, the big one: SimCity 3000. Much like Railroad Tycoon 2 and the forthcoming Civilisation titles (I should imagine), this game is strikingly like its predecessor. So the six million dollar question is how do you update a game without tampering with its successful elements whilst still doing more than just prettying up the graphics? Maxis have gone most of the way to answering this.

No 3D

The aims of SimCity haven't changed. You are the mayor of a town and must manage the bureaucratic affairs of taxing, governing and protecting your citizens, known as Sims. Keeping a population in control and staying out of debt are the big challenges for the would-be mayor. We still have the isometric view that is used in many games today. There was some indication early in development that SimCity 3000 would be fully three dimensional, but since the technology of the average gamer's machine hasn't evolved sufficiently, this idea was shelved. For those who played SimCity 2000, this is very fami-



time by the player. These include the Alamo, Big Ben, St. Basil's Cathedral, the Tower of London and (in a limited edition) the Sydney Opera House!

Interfering interface

The controls are much the same: functional and logical, for the most part. The windows style arrangement of tools is gone and sadly I think the controls of SimCity 2000 were a little better. Functions that are used a lot, like the Query tool, are now stuck in subdirectories, but there are hotkeys available, so this isn't such a flaw. You can't leave an array of graphs up around the screen that might be useful to



functional and logical, for the most part. The windows style arrangement of tools is gone and sadly I think the controls of SimCity 2000 were a little better. Functions that are used a lot, like the Query tool, are now stuck in subdirectories, but there are hotkeys available, so this isn't such a flaw. You can't leave an array of graphs up around the screen that might be useful to



Pure and simple gameplay. That's all you need - no guns, no aliens, just city planning.

iar territory, with some happy improvements.

Up close, personal

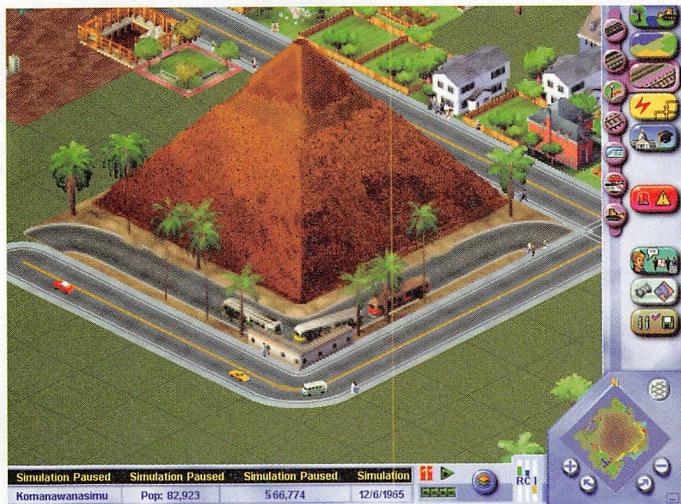
The most noticeable improvement is in the level of detail in SimCity 3000. The area of your town is vastly larger and with resolutions of 640x480 (up to 1280x1024!), it's very clear and you are able to see a lot more. You can zoom in to almost street level; there are people walking down the street and the traffic on the roads is more than just blue dashes. On the flip side, you can zoom out a considerable way to view your grand creations. All structures and buildings are now properly three dimensional, so there are four different sides to everything and buildings don't spin to follow you! Happily, there are now around 500 different buildings that can be erected. Some of these are landmark buildings that can be built at any



you; though most windows must be closed before you can return to play. This is really sloppy and constrictive. In all, the interface is probably more user-friendly, but a little less useful.

Smart advice

Despite the faults, there are some welcome improvements to the game. There's a much greater depth in the situations you encounter in SimCity 3000. There are many ordinances and petitioners to consider, so thankfully, your advisors are much more helpful, this time around. Gone are the days of seeing advice like "Build more Roads" that didn't make much sense at all. In this SimCity, your advisors have much to impart, there's a nice level of detail and the information is useful.



It's a bit disappointing that some of the features planned for SC3K had to be dropped, like the true-3D bit, but surely they could have included a scenario or two, couldn't they? Bugger!

theory, has very little to do with the game. Bravo Maxis!

Update, not innovate

Some would say that SimCity 3000 is no more than an update of its predecessor. Perhaps it is, but that hardly matters. SimCity has returned with fantastic gameplay and there are enough changes and improvements to justify interest in it. For the most part, it's a sleeker, smoother, better-running SimCity and there's every reason to play this great game.

John Dewhurst



Bring in the crims!

You have an improved relationship with your neighbouring cities, and are able to trade services with them, like electricity, water and garbage disposal. Also, you have opportunities to accept business proposals from various entrepreneurs: you can allow a casino to build in your town or let a maximum security prison be built - for a fee, of course. Although there is no underground electricity cable as I hoped, the underground situation is much improved. You can now see the subway independent of the water pipes and the problems between the two have been rectified.

No scenarios! Bah!

One problem I had with the game was the lack of scenarios. Personally, I liked the various scenarios of SimCity 2000, requiring different styles of play to complete. As it stands, SimCity 3000 has some starter towns, but other than that there is just the basic game. Not a glaring omission, by any means, but perhaps an unfortunate oversight. There will apparently be add-ons to the game available from the web, including a build-

ing design tool and other maps and structures. I have to say that I had a soft spot for the arcologies of SimCity 2000, those monoliths were a real reward for creating a big city. As far as I can find, arcologies seem to be absent from SimCity 3000. Rewards have returned though, so all is not lost.

Ambient'n'jazzy

One of the best things about this game is the music. It'll blow you away! For a PC game, this is top notch. You have a variety of selectable soundtracks, some suspiciously similar to the music of SimCity 2000. Needless to say, I turned that music off. The soundtrack ranges from entertaining jazz tracks to moody, movie-style incidental music, to almost ambient soundscapes. It's very impressive, considering the music, in

PLUS+

GOLD

90%

Category Planning Sim
Players 1
Publisher Maxis/EA
Price \$89.95
Rating G
Available Now

For New & improved SimCity, with all the creases ironed out, superb music, more detail, more buildings, looks really fancy.

Against Some problems with interface, no arcologies or scenarios (grumble, grumble...)

Need P166, 32 MB RAM, 4xCD, 2MB DirectX-6 graphics card

Want P233, 8xCD, 8MB 2D graphics card, 3D accelerator

3D SUPPORT

D3D, 3Dfx supported

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April Issue

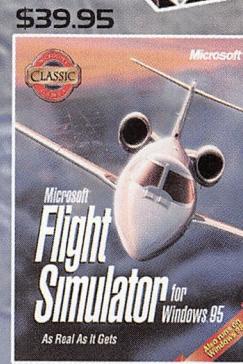
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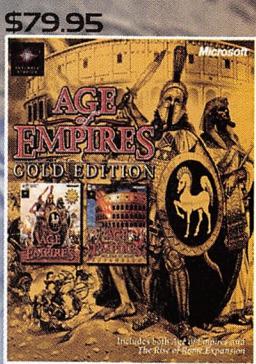
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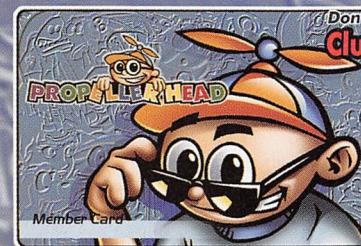
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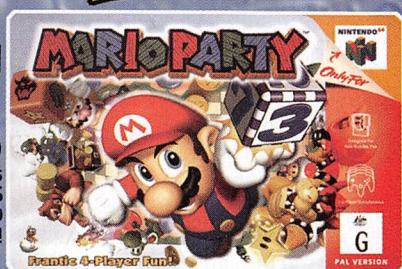
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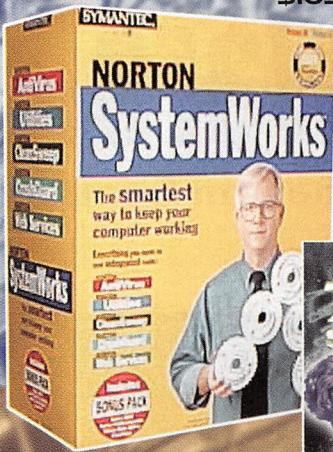
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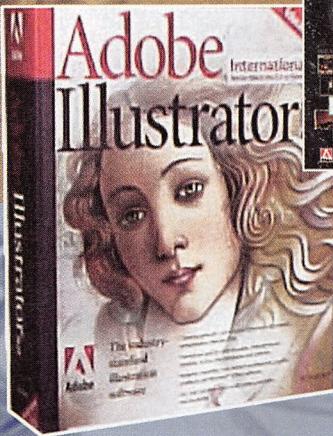
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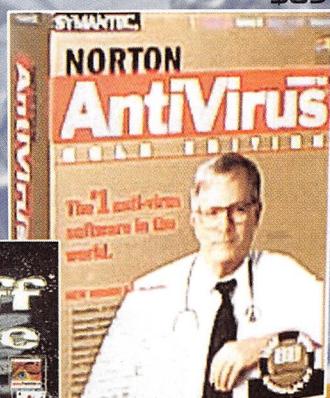
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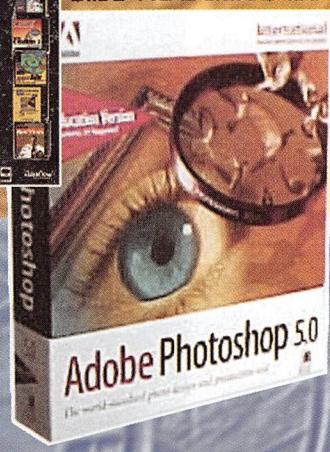
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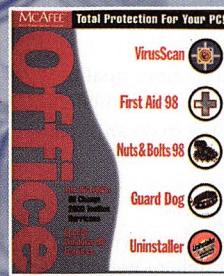
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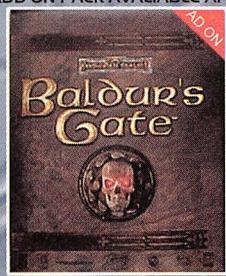
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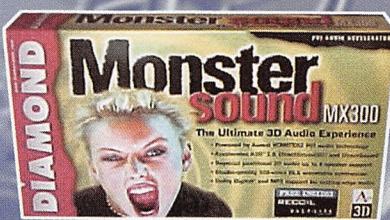


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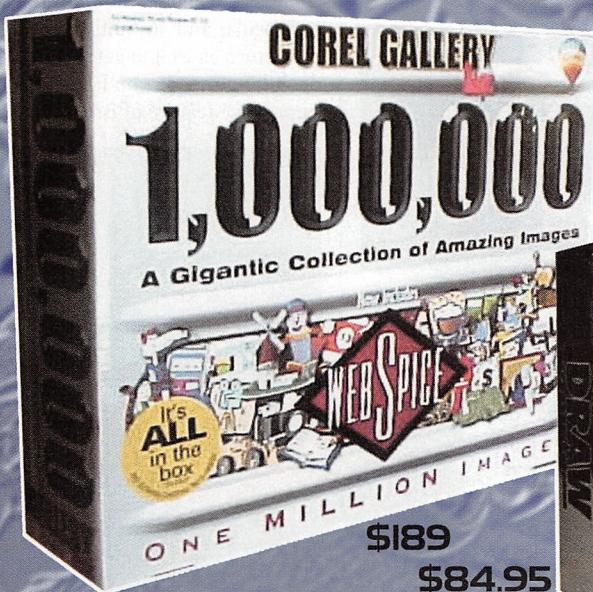
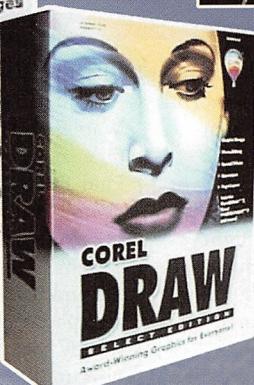


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STARCRAFT: Brood Wars

One of the best RTS games ever gets a shot in the arm from one of the best add-on packs ever. Zerglings, ahoy!

Add-on mission packs fall into two categories. Cheap half baked money grubbing ventures such as most of the C&C/Red Alert packs, or very impressive packs which add to the game immensely such as Quake's Scourge of Armagon. Luckily, Brood Wars falls into the second category.

Ooh, classy!

Brood Wars is a mission pack for the hugely popular Starcraft, and the effort put into it really show what a class act the development team is. Almost everything new is finely tuned and beautifully presented, there are new cut scenes and a whole new storyline to follow in the three new campaigns. It's

obvious Blizzard have risen far, far above the previous standard in mission packs, a standard which now looks abysmal in the light of Brood Wars.

Kerrigan returns

The storyline behind Brood Wars continues the Starcraft saga. As you'd expect the Zerg, Terran and Protoss are all still struggling for survival. In-fighting has disrupted the Zerg to the point of destruction, the Protoss' goal is to reunite with their brethren the Dark Templars and rebuild their home world and the Terran emperor has his own problems with his ex-girlfriend Kerrigan as well as a different conspiracy. Tension is at breaking point, and we all know that to settle everything down all you need is a bit of biffo. Brood Wars delivers.

Brand spanking

For the ensuing war you're going to need some new weaponry, and Brood Wars doesn't let you down here

either with a meaty choice of new firepower to choose from, which ever side you ally with. Instead of doing the old trick of getting one of the old units and calling it a new one by simply adding some more armour or giving it a weapon from a different old unit Blizzard have gone all out making two brand spanking new units for each race. The best thing about them is that the balance which was so finely tuned



Flash 3D graphics be damned - this is pure, golden gameplay



aspects and redefines quality. Brood Wars should be modelled as the right way to do an expansion pack.

More multiplayer

Along with these two things, there are a couple of new tile sets, which is nice for a bit of a change of scenery but nothing spectacular and are some funky new tunes as well to get you in the killing mood. Another very impressive feature of Brood Wars



in Starcraft remains fully intact, and there is still no all powerful race and each unit fits seamlessly into the game world.

Story, story, story

Brood Wars is a very tight package; it definitely is not just a few levels from the net bundled together with no semblance of connection. The storyline is engrossing (some say more than the original) and it just reeks class. The cinematic sections of the game are fantastic, you really couldn't ask for more.

Blizz, you rock!

You can see how good Brood Wars is when you compare it to other releases of its kind. Take Red Alert: Counterstrike; while the feature set was extremely promising the end result was a very poor effort, mostly because the new units were really only old ones and there was no story to speak of. Brood Wars takes these two





NEW TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION

Each race has two new units and the Protoss have a new Archon. Here they are in brief, for a more detailed look at each one check out the playguide in this issue.

Terran

Medic: The medic is, as you'd expect, a healing unit. It will do this automatically, though it does have some defensive abilities with the use of a blinding weapon.



Valkyrie: An air to air unit which is comparable to the Devourer. It fires salvos of eight missiles and is quite devastating against a tight knit group due to missile splash damage.

Zerg

Lurker: The lurker is mostly a defensive weapon. It burrows itself into the ground and sends lines of spikes to any unit dumb enough to come by. It has no attack when above ground though, making it fairly vulnerable.

Devourer: This unit is quite similar to the Valkyrie and is evolved from a Mutalisk.

Protoss

Corsair: An air to air unit which, though relatively weak, has its uses. It can cast a web below it so no ground forces can attack it, making it much easier for other air units to take them out.

Dark Templar: Although this unit was sometimes available in Starcraft you could never build them - now you can. Always cloaked and most often devastating, detector units are a must when taking them on.

Dark Archon: When two Dark Templars are joined this is the result. A super unit which has no attack abilities but can take control of enemy units as well as do mass lockdowns. Beware, they are heavily armoured.



though is its multi-player capabilities.

Fortunately, Blizzard have recognised the huge success of Starcraft online and included Battle.net support right from the outset. This might not seem like such a huge thing but support for mission packs online has been dreadful over the past few years. Another nice touch is that Brood Wars allows you to play the original Starcraft without having to quit out and restart Starcraft losing valuable gaming time. This may also seem like a small touch, but it scores big points for user friendliness. Multiplay wouldn't be complete without



Be warned: Brood Wars is not for the apprentice Starcraftee. Experienced 'Crafters need only apply'

new maps and once again Blizzard bring home the bacon with one hundred fresh ones, right on the CD.

Ace!

Every aspect of Brood Wars oozes class. If you're a diehard Starcraft addict don't think twice, head to your local games store now and pick up a copy. Anyone who thought that expansions were only good for making money from the suckers who are dumb enough to buy them should think again; Brood Wars has set a new standard in every single way. The ball is in Westwood's court.

Rod Campbell

PLUS+



87%

Category RTS
Players 1-4
Publisher Wolf Interactive
Price \$49.95
Rating TBA
Available Now (and as part of Battle Chest)

For This is how expansion packs should be done, developers take note. A new dimension added to Starcraft.

Against Most of the missions will be too hard for casual players. Expert players only. (this may also be a plus, depending on your viewpoint)

Need P90, 16MB RAM, Full version of Starcraft

Want 32MB RAM, 4xCD

STARSEIGE: Tribes

Apparently there's a deep and intricate story behind the Starsiege universe. But who the hell cares? The game absolutely rocks!

You teleport into the world, heavily armed. You and fifteen teammates are lined up around the lip of a vertical tube. The team begins flowing down into the base like some solid metal breakfast cereal, landing neatly to enter battle stations of your base.

Somewhere, several virtual kilometres away, sixteen enemy players are gearing up for a similar offensive to the one you are beginning to launch. Striding onto an outer parapet, you perceive a smooth undulating landscape of hills and valleys, stretching to the horizon. Checking the map mode, you see a live iconic display of a lot of enemy players bunched together, approaching fast. Flicking back to 3D view you face south-east and zoom in with your scope, just in time to see a Carrier ship wafting out of the haze in the extreme distance. As it passes over a line of your teammates advancing along a valley floor, it releases a string of soldiers, who fall slowly, training heavy weapons on the men on the ground. Several of the ground based troops float up to meet them, returning fire. The battle has begun.

Hybrid havoc

Starsiege Tribes is a multi-player only game of futuristic



It's a simple idea, really. The popularity of FPS games melded with huge outdoor areas and teamplay - winner!

military action, which is best described as Outwars meets Team Fortress. Outwars was more like a flight sim, with enormous outdoor areas, and soldiers with jump-jets powered by a limited (but constantly regenerating) energy source. Same deal here. Team Fortress is a teamwork game for a lot of players which combines an arsenal of varied weapons, complicated objectives (beyond capture the flag) and carefully balanced soldier classes. Same deal again, but Starsiege is simple to set up, easy to play and has a capitalistic reward system for adept players.



Democratic killing

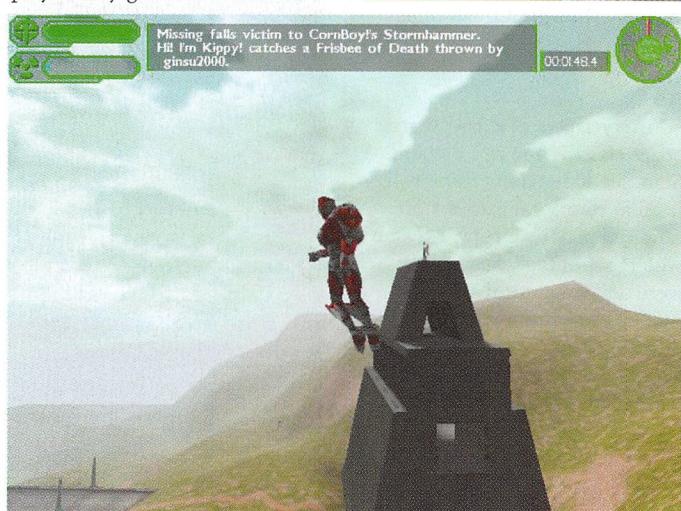
Internet gaming has been a bit of a pie in the sky concept for too long. Starsiege, being built from the ground up to be multi-player, excels in many areas. Players can also vote for a change of map, settings or scenario mid-level, mid combat! This requires an overall majority to succeed, but it's very cool when everyone bitches about a map or game type, votes to change, and gets on with it!

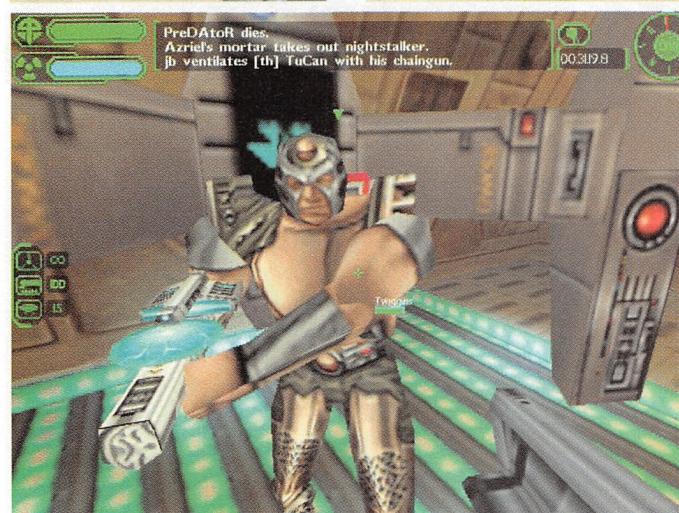
Shopping Nirvana

In Tribes your in-game score is treated as a kind of accumulated wealth which you can use to buy better guns, bombs, repair kits, suits of armour and aircraft. You can also buy things like beacons and visual indicating Lasers that you can use to point to what you want the team to nail.

Trackin' foes

Despite the massive scale of the Starsiege environments, up





close objects and models still look quite impressive. Not gorgeous, but players do have independent guns and heads that swivel around as the player moves their viewpoint, also the weapons held are completely and distinctly visible. Bullet holes are temporarily marked into walls and players leave a trail of five or six rubbery footprints, which rapidly vanish. During heated battle, or pursuit down corridors though, these features really influence the play and add useful information to the combat.

Talk to me, Vasquez!

Another cool thing is the inclusion of vocal aspects to the communications in-game: commands and queries sound throughout the action, which is quite cool. I have the impression it will be possible to compose your own sentences using a phonetic string of syllables in the future, or so I hear.

Gamespy?

Tribes use their own master server system to auto-filter the playable servers into your window, then joining is one simple click away. It's really refreshing after the headache of Quakeworld et al. The entire game seems to have been built around anti-lag theories. Slow projectiles, gun "warm up" time and the lethargically damped actions of aircraft are all part and parcel of the experience. Small price to pay though, when the results are this good.

Ed Dawson



The coolest new addition to the genre has to be the programmable voice commands. Exciting, creative, funky!

PLUS+

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88%

Category First-Person Shooter

Players 2-32: Multiplayer only (TCP/IP, IPX)

Publisher Sierra On-Line

Price \$89.95

Rating Teen (13+)

Available Now

For Immense landscape scale, nicely tweaked gameplay, the vehicles, the awesome Gun Scope.

Against It's not as sexy as Quake, and there's no gory effects to speak of. No bloody Gibs here!

Need P166 (with 3D accelerator, P200 without), 32MB RAM, 4xCD, Win 9x/NT

Want 56k Modem, fast ISP, Voodoo2 card

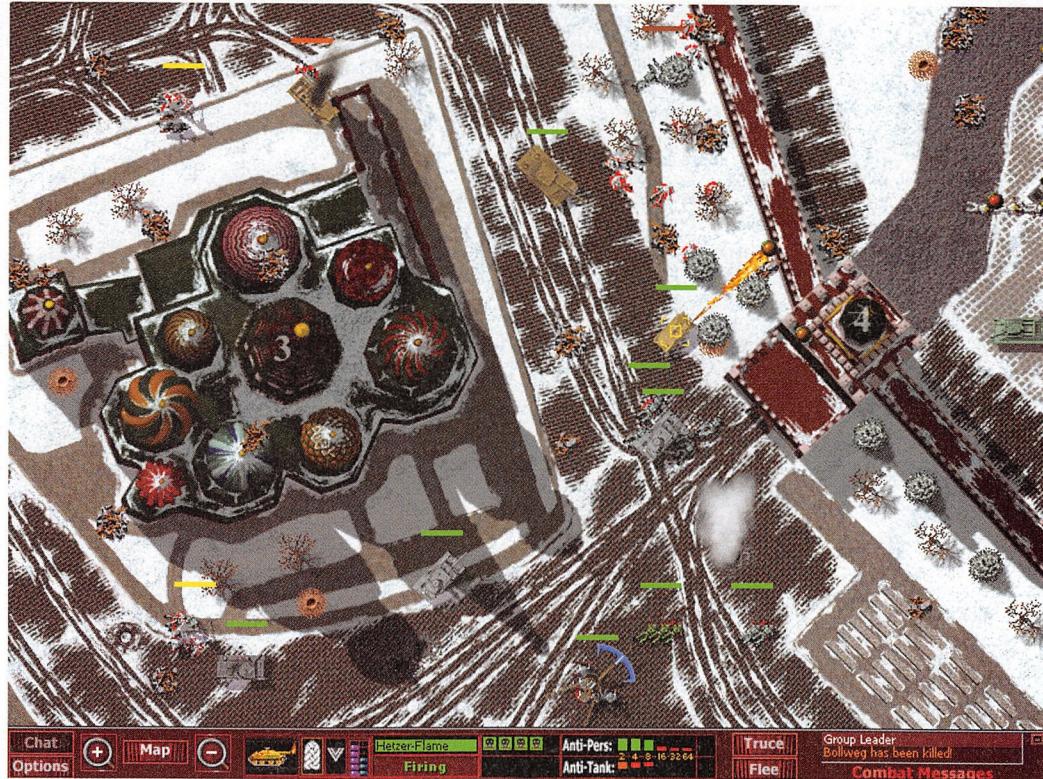
3D SUPPORT

OpenGL supported

CLOSE COMBAT 3: The Russian Front

The latest in Microsoft's real time squad based strategy series reaches new heights. And you can play as the Russki's, too!

Hitler's greatest folly was to arrogantly send his armies into the frozen steppes of Russia clothed only in revealing see-through nighties and carried into battle on an army of Mr. Whippy vans (mostly with bald tyres). The German front line troops quickly saw the error of their Commander's plans as they sat in their meat locker cold trenches and snapped frozen extremities off their comrades to pass the time. Meanwhile the Russian's whooped it up inside their winter equipped T-34's, sipping champaign and nibbling on hot and tasty treats from the snack bar. Some say the T-34 was cramped inside but there was always enough room for the waiters to carry three plates, plus a round of drinks, without spilling a thing. Of course during combat the catering staff would go below for a game of billiards or a swim in the pool but apart from that sacrifice life for Soviet tank crews was, comparatively, pretty sweet.



Psycho troopers

Close Combat introduced the concept of psychology to strategy games, giving your troops realistic behaviour under fire and adding a whole new element of realism to the genre. Close Combat 3 goes one step further by adding pop psychology. Now your troops can bare all to the new 'Oprah Winfrey' unit who perks them up with her trademark banter: "C'mon say it, say it loud...I'm gay and I'm proud" Well OK it doesn't really. What it does have though is a new leadership concept, promotion system and campaign structure.

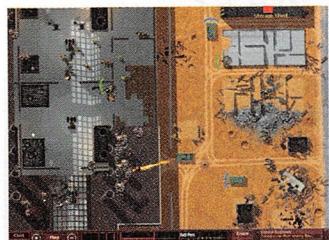
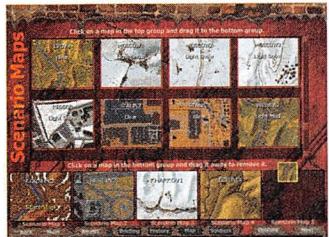


Getting tanked

As you can see from the grabs on these pages the game doesn't look noticeably different from its forebear and all the development has indeed been 'behind the scenes' so to speak. The new leadership system places an emphasis on keeping units under control and informed of the battle situation. To do this a leader must be in range of the units under his control and the effect is to

The concept of troop morale has always been in the CC series, and CC3 continues with this great feature

increase his units morale, combat effectiveness and obedience. There are three types of command unit: the individual officer, the command team (which puts a few well trained fighting men alongside the commander) and the command vehicle, which is usually the best tank type available at that particular period in the war.



Run awaaaaay!

Campaigns are handled slightly differently now and when each battle is finished you get a rundown of your situation and your opponents - how many promotion points you got, plus or minus force strength, and so on. You also don't spend as much time on the same maps if you, for example, fail to dislodge your opponent from his positions the game moves on to the next battle rather than continuing until that one is properly decided. I was a bit disappointed by this as I liked the realism of having to battle it out on a map until it was decided once and for all who owned it.

Latvian Yak Fanciers

I've been a big fan of the series and I must say that there are a few things which I had hoped Microsoft would fix. The LOS or line of sight rules are still WAY too anal in my opinion. A lone tree on a field is NOT going to stop a T-34 from shooting 800 meters to hit a gun emplacement on another hill, unless of course one of the waiters has tripped and spilled hot chocolate in the gunners lap (something that apparently happened with alarming regularity until the Soviet hierarchy forced all their tank crews to drink cold Vodka instead). Of course, the instances of toasted nether regions were reduced considerably but from nowhere Soviet tanks suddenly began to have a problem with head on collisions and road rage. Many reports tell of bemused German troops advancing on Soviet tank positions only to find the Russian drivers out of their vehicles and throwing haymakers at each other.

"Do you know what an indicator is, Latvian Yak rooter?"



One of the most edifying improvements to CC3 is that now tanks shouldn't have a problem shooting their shells up and over the odd tree, rather than having their shot blocked (which was quite silly, really)

"Da, here is an indication for you, Borsch breath"

And it's still very hard to position your men exactly where you want them.

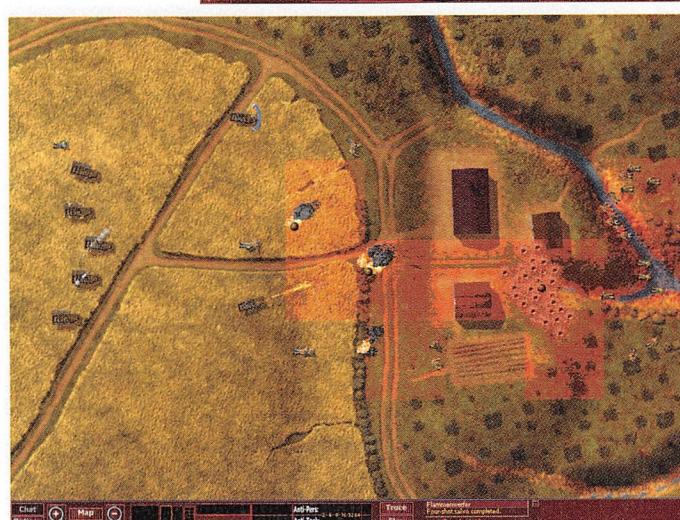
But is it real?

Speaking of tanks, CC3 has a lot more of them involved in the action than previous versions which adds to the overall realism, it always seemed odd that there were so few tanks in the previous versions of the game.

The developer's have had a fine line to tread trying to balance gameplay

and historical realism, ie. how not to make the early war too hard for the Soviet player or the late war too hard for the Germans, but managed to do a good job. Overall CC3 is still a damn addictive strategy game and one that stands alone in its' genre.

George Soropos



PLUS+



88%

Category Strategy
Players 1-2 (Direct connect, IPX, TCP/IP)
Publisher Microsoft
Price \$89.95
Rating G
Available Now

For More addictive platoon level warfare with more campaigns, scenarios and unit types than ever

Against Not many improvements made over previous version, still a few niggling annoyances.

Need P133, 32MB RAM, 2MB Video card

Want P233, 64MB RAM

RUTHLESS.COM

Inspired by multi-billionaire Billie's "quest to satisfy consumer needs", do you have what it takes to be a complete prick?

Ruthless.com is one of the ever expanding suite of games produced by Tom Clancy's Red Storm Entertainment company. It's a (slightly) futuristic turn based strategy game that is centred around a group of computer companies fighting for their rightful share of the market - which of course would be when they're in a monopoly situation.

You are the boss of one of the computer corporations and it is your job to strangle the market by whatever means it takes. At your disposal is the wealth of your corporation, and the departments you decide to build.

Fifth floor: R&D

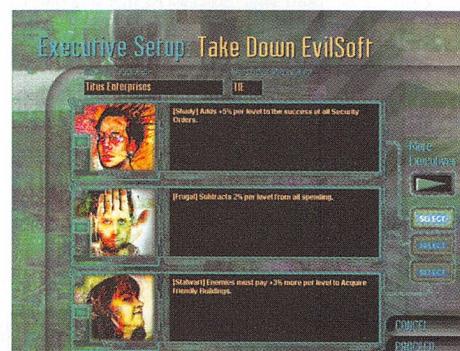
These departments include Admin (where your executives rule the roost); Product (the mainstay of your company, this is where you make your money); R&D (maintains the quality of your products as well as thinking of ideas for new products); Marketing (to advertise your product and show the market that it is better than the rest); Human Resources (to hire and fire employees); Acquisitions (an essential department if you wish



to expand your empire); Legal (to establish patents, and instigate or fend off litigation); Security (to both protect your offices and to attack the competition); and Computer Core (to hack into the others' computer systems).

There are over 65 orders that you can make, all of which are dependent on one or more of the above departments existing. The effectiveness of some departments is affected by others, and random events can also come into play from time to time.

The six scenarios only vary a little, and the campaign is basically one long scenario (rather than many scenarios plugged together). This means once you have played the game once or twice, you'll pretty much have the hang of it. Probably the best scenario is Take Down EvilSoft, where you and 4 other small corporations are determined to kill off the monopolistic EvilSoft that has a huge market share. Backyard deals, constant coordinated attacks physically, legally and technically provide a fascinating insight into what might be happening in the computer industry today.



It's not the most graphically intensive game you'll ever see. But as always, it's the gameplay that counts

Industrial espionage

Reading through the full 68 page manual, I had high hopes that I would be able to make a good start of the game, but to my dismay, I discovered that the manual had quite a few holes and didn't go anywhere near the amount of detail required to cover some of the actions that can be performed.

This resulted in a game where I was always a bit unclear of what I was doing, with a lot of trial and error type actions at first. Casing a building was successful, but I was unclear of what I should do to perform my burglary attempt. They seemed to be related but the Case bonus only seemed to apply to one department in the building, though no mention of this was made in the manual.

Also, one major problem a player can have if not careful is that of having your Executive kidnapped or assassinated. When you start a scenario or campaign, you begin with one Executive who can make two orders per turn. One of the orders he/she can make is to find other Executive prospects. To do this, you need to have an HR department. Then to hire the prospect, you need an empty Admin department.

I recommend this to all budding Ruthless.com players since a number of things can happen to your Executive and if you only have one and he/she is incapacitated, you are unable to make any orders and are basically at the whim of the computer. In





one 20-turn scenario, I was unable to make an impact for 5 turns, as my only Executive was kidnapped and only released 4 turns later.

Abstraction layer

The interface is abstract, much like a board game. The market is laid out like an isometric grid with a building taking up a square and any products housed in that building affecting the surrounding tiles. Alongside this is the main area icons of Corporate, Legal, Security, Deals and so on. Below the main screen is the information panel. This shows you data on the currently selected Executive and the currently selected building in your corporate empire.

In being as symbolic as it is, some of the information that could be vital to success to your game may be unclear. For instance, it took me about 20 turns before I realised that some of the computer opponents had been offering me deals. This was because the sign of a proffered deal is a dim flashing circle that is easily missed amongst the rest of the screen layout.

The AI was disappointingly simplistic. On the AI Novice mode, the majority of players will find that they will usually win the scenarios, while on Intermediate mode, there is not a great deal of (noticeable) difference.

Alanis loves it

Multiplayer is provided for in the form of TCP/IP networking.

Two major Internet gaming sites are supported right out of the box: Mplayer and Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone. It's a bit ironic, really, given that the entire game emulates (sort of) Microsoft's rise to, and (alleged) abuse of, power.

Multiplayer is still turn-based but has an extra feature to avoid one player holding up the game. What happens is that there is a time limit for each turn that starts counting down after the second last player has submitted his/her orders. This enables the turns to be varied in length but also ensures that slow players can't overly impede gameplay. As the game heats up with security and legal attacks occurring with regular frequency, this option allows all players to have a chance at getting all their desired actions in.

As an unexpected side effect, this option can effectively handicap the player who is dominating the game. This situation arises when the dominant player has many executives and many orders to make while the others have much smaller corporations. As these others can all make their orders relatively quickly, pressure can

be put on the leading player, with the result that they miss opportunities that would have put their lead beyond doubt. It's a nice touch and makes for an interesting strategic option for collusion between players to screw up those doing well.

Andrew Parsons



And you'd have to admit, there really is substantial appeal for games where the ultimate goal is to be as sneaky, underhanded, and as bastardly as possible.

PLUS+



www.redstorm.com/ruthless/

82%

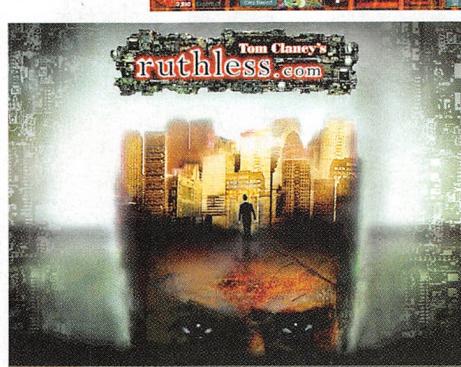
Category Turn Based Strategy
Players 1-6
Publisher Take 2 Interactive
Price TBA
Rating G
Available Now

For Good multiplayer option, nice variety of scenarios and random events.

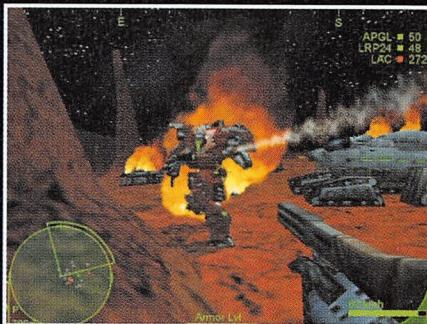
Against A manual that appears enigmatic, fairly simplistic GUI.

Need Win 9x, P120, 16MB RAM, 4xCD

Want P166, 32MB RAM



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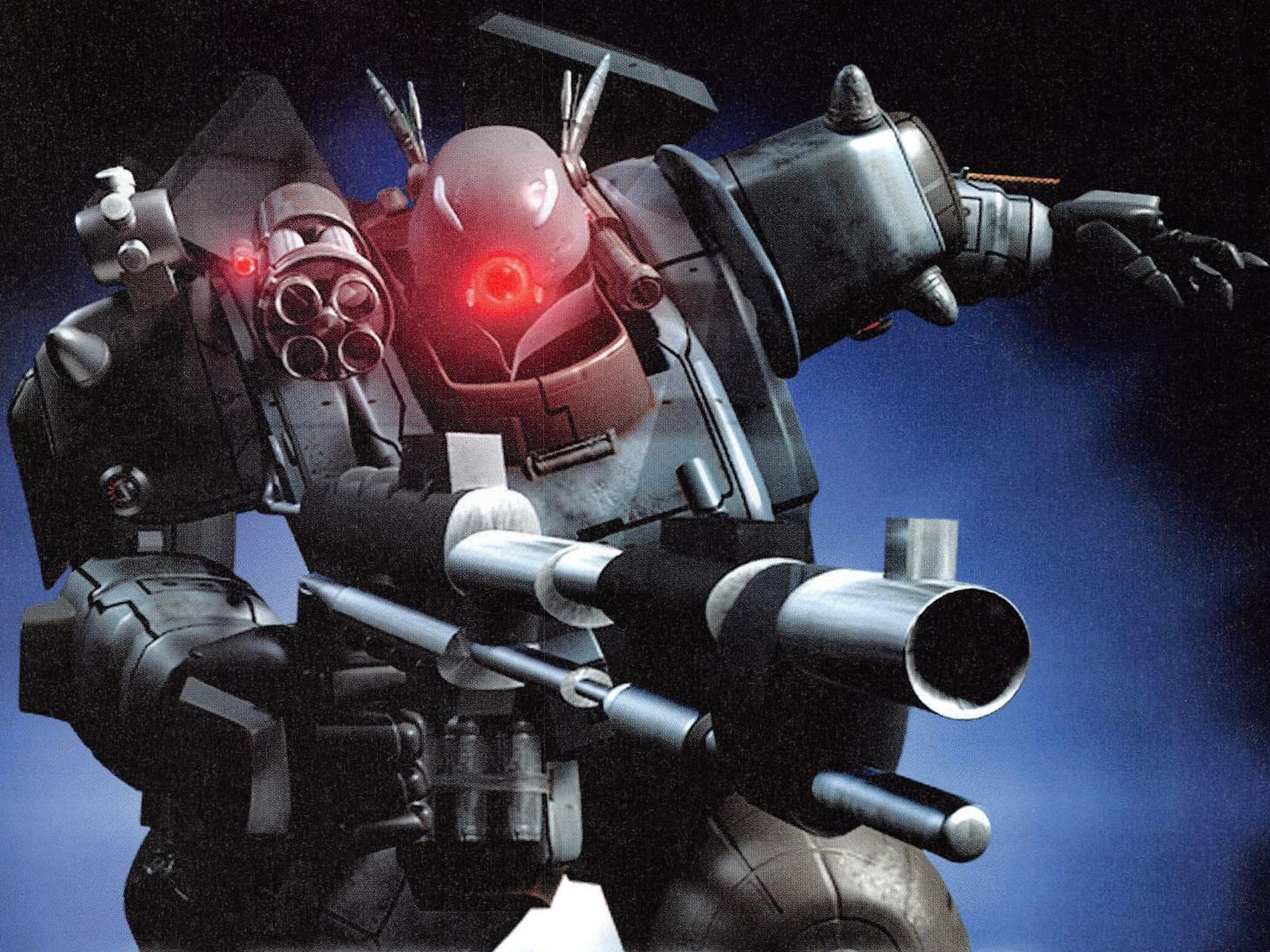
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MYTH II: Soulblighter

The original was a little hit and (oh dear) Myth, but the sequel doesn't put a foot wrong. Onward ho, my Dwarven minions!



Devilishness is afoot. You thought that you finished with those pesky Fallen Lords after the Myth, did you? Fool! Did you not know there would be more?? Verily, noble armies did once crush Balor and end the threat of the dark hordes. It is now three score years since such time (that's sixty years, don't ya know). The country has been peaceful, with much time for maidens & haystacks, whistling & fishing, ale & pork, and more haystacks & maidens (and pork...). But now, the forces of an unbeaten Fallen Lord, the Soulblighter have been assembled. Cruniac and his troops come upon this wickedness in the town of Willow Creek, and you, dear general, must lead them, by wiles and cunning, to

defeat the cursed army, that now wanders throughout the land. So the country can get back to the important tasks of milking & singing, cheese & crops and, of course, those maidens & haystacks...

Gaming of yore

Welcome, weary gamer, to the legend that is Myth II: Soulblighter. Most of us will remember the beginning of 1998 and the original, Myth: The Fallen Lords. It was a glorious time. If however, you missed it (perhaps you were in a coma or something), Myth II is as good a place to enter as any. In the original, Bungie gave us a new and unique slant on the real time strategy fad. No collecting vespene gas or chopping down trees to build with, in these



games. There is no resource management: you don't make your troops. Each mission has different objectives, you may have to slaughter your enemies, or protect a character or location. The strategy revolves entirely around handling a given number of units in battle, within each mission. It is how you employ your various units that is the challenge. Therein lies the game. There was precious little to complain about in the original Myth and it's satisfying to see that the good things were left well alone.

Co-ordination

In Myth II, all necessary options are on display to be clicked on and the game is a

rather mouse oriented, but use of the keyboard is still available. There are lots of very useful controls, such as shift and click for waypoints and the ability to hotkey particular smaller forces within your army and give specific orders to them. The camera is controlled by either the keyboard or mouse and I suggest use one or the other, as the two together would cause chaos at unfortunate moments. It's quite a juggling act. For the newcomer, Myth II will be a little daunting and require persistence. However, once sussed out the interface is very, very good.

This goes with that

The units have changed, as you'd expect. Generally, your troops have returned (a fraction) more intuitive. Your bowmen are now better shots and more useful. The bowmen and dwarves are now less likely to launch an arrow or mortar attack unwittingly at your own troops when near an enemy. However, if your little legion gets in disarray, "friendly fire" can still become a problem in battle.

Your men remain in formation better in Myth II, which is a great improvement. As you'd expect, there is a good variety of melee units (like the warrior), projectiles units



No resource gathering, no buildings, just murder, mayhem, and blood. And lashings of it too! Yay!





(bowmen and archers) and magic units (like the warlock). The strategy of Myth II really lies in the effective combining of different units. The combinations depend on the mission, but in multiplayer you are able to choose units, and not only from the light side. You can have dwarves alongside mauls, and stygian knights alongside warriors.

More lifelike death

The revisions really have improved the game. There is the obvious fact that the environments look better, due to four times finer terrain mesh. You now have wildlife running or flying around and it FEELS more like a real scene, rather than a game board. You also have animated features, like moving gates and spinning windmills, not to mention that walls can now be destroyed by mortar fire. The units are now much more animated - they have considerable more detail and perform varied attacks. The cutscenes in the game are provided by the Japanese animators, Anime International Company, and they flesh out the narrative well. All up, the eye candy is suitably above par.

Stevie Wonder

Geography in Myth II is more significant: higher hills, deeper troughs. This has a great effect on the dynamics of battle and ultimately strategy, as higher ground will help you to bop the heads of the undead forces of

darkness, rather than their toes. Over the twenty four single player missions, battle occurs not only on open plains, but in interior locations, like a dungeon and even on the deck of a ship! There is a lot more to consider this time around in planning your attacks.

Free multipaly

Like the original, the real joy takes place in the multiplayer game. Bungie.net provides free access after registration, for Myth II. There are many games to play, in co-op or versus styles. Believe me that Myth II is being wasted if not used in multipaly.

Gonzo editing

The editing tools, Fear and Loathing will be shipped with Myth II. Fear is a tag editor, enabling you to create or customise just about anything in the game: projectiles, weather, units, scenery and sound. Loathing is the map editor, allowing you to make your own battlefields. This adds another element in an otherwise remarkably impressive package.

If you've been keeping track on the web, you'll know that Bungie screwed up grandissimo with the initial release of Myth II: Soulblighter. There was a horrible bug that had nothing to do with the game itself, but with the

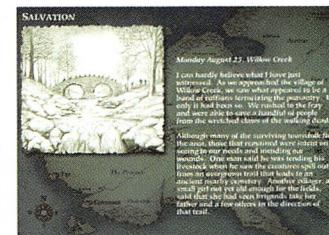
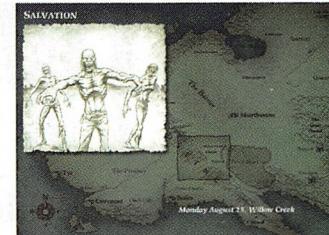


uninstaller, which caused data loss. Doubtless, this will be fixed by the time we see the released title over here. Myth II is otherwise bug-free and hurray for that!

Haystacks. And pork.

Myth II will be the Real Time Strategy title of the moment. I found Myth II, in all aspects, a satisfying, challenging game, with excellent gameplay and intelligent improvements, it's hard to go past. If strategy is your style or not, Myth II: Soulblighter is one truly marvellous game, well worth playing. Onward, there's battle to be had! Have at you, foul dog! Back to hell with you! Down, stench! Leave my haystacks be!...

John Dewhurst



Strangely, the interface still carries the annoyingly useless fantasy styled explanations of the units. Bah!

PLUS+

Visit taking orders for Myth II at the Bungie Store!

Myth II: SOULBLIGHTER

Screenshots

A military camp is shown in one of the new mythologies.

Latest News

Myth II News (12/20) [All of the Myth II: Soulblighter news](#) is here. Read the latest news and keep up to date with the latest news from the game.

Myth II Demo (12/20) [A playable demo of Myth II: Soulblighter is now available for download as a mystery download on the Internet. A sign of things to come, the demo shows the new units and](#)

www.bungie.com/mythii

GOLD

91%

Category Real Time Strategy
Players 1-16 (IPX, TCP/IP)
Publisher Bungie Software
Price \$TBA
Rating M
Available Now

For First class RTS, multipaly, Fear & Loathing editing tools, great atmosphere and music, great interface, need I go on?

Against Steep learning curve, that's about it.

Need Win95, P133, 32MB RAM, SVGA video card

Want P233, 4MB video card, 4MB sound card, 3D card

3D SUPPORT

D3D, 3Dfx

LUFTWAFFE COMMANDER

Fly the Dark Side with occasional flight sim company SSI

Achtung! Achtung! Luftwaffe Commander vil haf you terrorising the Spanish, French, Russians and Englanders as you trace the amazing development of the mighty Nazi Luftwaffe from the Spanish Civil War in 1936, throughout WWII, to its destruction with the fall of the Third Reich in 1945.

The heart of Luftwaffe Commander is its single mission game. This contains five mission areas beginning with the Spanish Civil War where you fly in the Condor Legion assisting General Franco's forces. This was the German testing ground for its air and ground warfighting theories that later became doctrine and were put into practice during WWII. Here you fly the Hienkel 51B biplane! And you progress on and move to the first Me 109 as it was "tested" in Spain.

From Spain you go to the Battle of France and the failure (from the German side anyway) that was the Battle of Britain. Operation Barbarossa, the Russian Front, is the fourth mission area, and the final is the defence of the German Fatherland!

Real pretend war

Each mission area gives you ten mission choices, and you can take your pick of bomber escort, combat air patrols, anti-shipping, ground attack and so on. Quite a variety, but why I say this is the heart of the game is that Luftwaffe Commander also provides a "fake" campaign. This strings each of the missions together in a linear fashion. So in essence, the challenge is to get from the 1st to the 50th mission



(above) A Mosquito in flames and very vulnerable!
(left) The awarding of medals is a basic affair also in Luftwaffe Commander. A far cry from what it was really like for German Aces presented to Hitler

without dying! A real challenge.

You also get to choose between two types of gameplay; Iron Cross or Knights Cross. Take the Iron Cross option and you can toggle on all the cheats, then as you progress through, you can toggle the cheats off. Whereas Knight's Cross has all the cheats off permanently, and is very difficult indeed.

Whatever choice you make, the mission briefings are very basic. They include a map with an arrow saying "go this way", and one word as the target or objective. No mission planning or weapons loadout. Not really up there with EAW, and I'm afraid it really goes down hill from here!

just says "Donald Duck" to me; very "arcadish". Then quite in the opposite direction there's some serious cockpit functionality allowing you to control the engine cowl flaps, propeller pitch, elevator trim and there's even a manual gear pump! Force Feedback support is also included and works well.

What I really dis-

liked about this game was the flight model and the AI. I could not discern any difference in the flight models no matter what realism setting it was on. But the "oh boy" award of the year goes to the AI that has your wingmen



PLUS⁺

THE LUFTWAFFE WAR DIARIES



The German Air Force in World War II

CAJUS BEKKER

If you'd like an excellent insight into the German strategy in all aspects of the Luftwaffe's battles during WWII, *The Luftwaffe War Diaries: The German Air Force in World War II* is a book to read. It's well balanced at the strategic level, but also includes some good tales of personal heroism and gallantry. The Author is Cajus Bekker and it was published 1994

68%

Category	Flight sim
Players	1 - 8 players by LAN (IPX/SPX and TCP/IP) or Internet (TCP/IP). 2 by null modem
Publisher	SSI
Price	\$49.95
Rating	G
Available	Now

For A simple interface, very few controls to learn, and a significant number of non-flyable aircraft to pit your skills against

Against Really only three aircraft to fly in missions and the campaign, the graphics are simplistic, poor AI, an overall lack of quality assurance in the product

Need P133 with 32 MB RAM

Want P166 with 32 MB RAM

3D SUPPORT
D3D and 3Dfx



(above) Spitfire guns kill in a JU 87 Stuka. The cockpit instrumentation is easy to read but very arcade like sented to Hitler
(right) The runway is 3 kilometres long Herman! Why not pull back on the stick and take off instead of crashing into the trees!

regularly crash on take off, collide with you as they fly, and even if you set up an Instant Action Dogfight, the enemy will often fly right by and crash without a shot being fired! As for calling for Wingmen help, don't worry about it, they don't often turn up to the party.

Only Eiffel

In the graphics department aircraft are simplistic models. Ground objects are 2D or 3D depending on where you are, and in Paris it really stands out with the Eiffel Tower being the only 3D object in town! Cannon shots can cause huge ground explosions from buildings that you'd then expect to collapse, but don't. However in the air, cannon impact looks good and while the flames and other effects are a little oily, they're not bad. Pity about the "mixed up mother goose" approach to the special

effects department, but it really is where the game's price starts to show the calibre of the game. Nevertheless, SSI do make up for it somewhat by providing over 46 non-flyable aircraft for encounters in each mission area. Some of these are the Blenheim Mk IV, Bristol Beaufighter, Fairey Battle Mk I, Stuka, Mosquito and Tupolev SB-2. I don't know about you, but I've never seen some of these in a sim before?

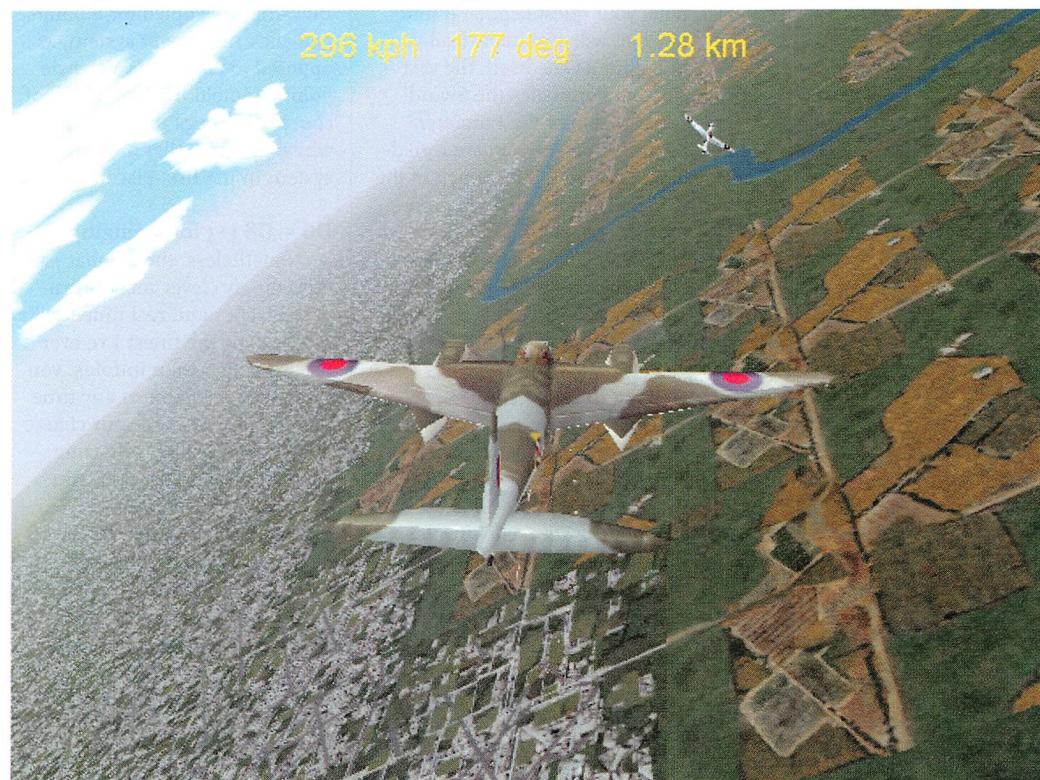
This brings me on to the other major element to the game Air Combat. Here you get to fly a further three aircraft, the good old Spitfire Mk V and P51D, and also the P39Q which was a US



made aircraft flown by Russian forces. This is the Instant Action element of Luftwaffe Commander, and you can fly with up to one wingman against six other aircraft in any combination you wish to select. This works well generally, has the AI problems indicated earlier, and often you select one aircraft as the enemy, and get another one when you fly the mission. Not all that consistent.

Great concept with the historical Nazi Luftwaffe aspect; pity about its implementation in the game.

Maj Ian Lindgren



BALDUR'S GATE

Years late, and one of the most anticipated old-school RPG's ever, Baldur's Gate still satisfies like a good hearty meal

When heavily anticipated games finally emerge from the vaporous hype, boxed and cling-wrapped and ready to play, it's inevitable that your initial experience with it will be tinged with disappointment. Baldur's Gate is one such game, although the degree of your disappointment will depend upon exactly what you were expecting it to be. Those after an epic, detailed story, full of minute interaction and lovingly crafted sub-quests - in other words, a game to rival Ultima VII - will be disappointed. Those after a huge, sprawling world with immense player freedom and a host of skills and stats to fiddle with and master - another Daggerfall, perhaps - will likewise be disappointed. So why is Baldur's Gate, if it offers neither of the above, such a bloody great game, then?

Teased ya!

But first the plot. You play an orphan, raised within the sheltered, academic walls of Candlekeep on the western edge of the Sword Coast, where the



sage, Gorion, has tutored you for the twenty years of your life. Now, however, Gorion has become distracted, fearful that some great danger is imminent.

Clearly, as he requests that the two of you flee Candlekeep at nightfall, Gorion knows more about your past than he has admitted. And on that intriguing note, your quest begins. A journey that will eventually lead you to Baldur's Gate itself, the vast city that dominates the Sword Coast region of the Forgotten Realms. You see, you are forbidden access to BG for much of the game and, rather than lessening the atmosphere, it serves instead to create a degree of suspense. So when you are finally permitted to enter those monolithic gates, it is tremendously exciting.

Getting to know you

During the initial stages of your quest, then, you'll be engaged in several varied activities. One of which will be acquainting yourself with the interface, including character management and the combat system. Here we have a typical bird's eye view featuring both a fog and shroud of war with a line of sight that extends marginally further than the edge of the screen. Although a fog of war is

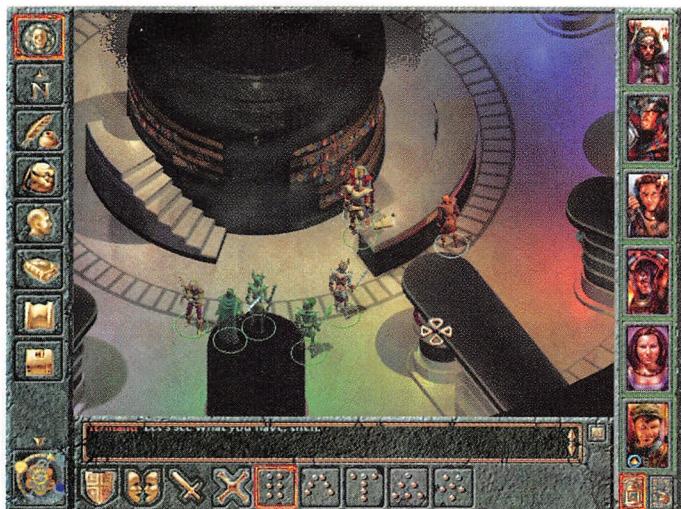
Interplay's hugely anticipated RPG isn't going to satisfy every fan of the genre.

never ideal, I presume this was done because developers, Bioware, have opted for a point-and-click movement system, as opposed to an Ultima VII-style point-and-hold method. (And, of course, this begs the question of why they chose that movement system in the first place).

D6 + D8 (+3 for strength)

Nonetheless, the combat - an exceedingly clever mix of turn-based tactics and real-time thrills - is perhaps the finest I've ever used. As the action unfolds, you can pause the game at any time to issue orders to all your characters, the game only restarting when you say so or when you delve into your inventory. AI scripts can be selected for each character - to instruct your ranger to use a ranged attack on any enemy or for your cleric to heal any wounded companion, for example - and will be carried out immaculately (with, I admit, the occasional exception). All the AD&D rules concerning initia-





tive, speed, distance and the length of combat rounds and turns are calculated (and displayed, if you wish), meaning that the dexterity of your mouse hand never enters the equation. *Diablo* this most definitely is not.

Extra bits

Another activity will be to simply soak up the atmosphere of the gameworld. The landscape looks beautiful, the hand-drawn scenery in each location is unique and features a vivid palette of autumnal trees, trampled pathways, gentle streams, rocky cliffs and gullies, and meadows of bright flowers. Each town is comprised of individualised houses, stores and taverns, and populated by a diverse cast of characters. Ambient sounds



accompany your progress, along with some appropriately medieval and portentous music and plenty of speech from both the characters in your party and the people you meet in your travels. Bioware deserve much praise for creating the most attractively presented RPG to date.

Real Role Playing

Before too long you will also have a good idea as to the nature and structure of the gameplay. While the main quest follows a fairly linear route, there is a countless number of non-essential tasks to get you well and truly



Happily enough, this is not just your average simple hack and slash the bad ole monsters affair. Many situations can be resolved through intelligent speech choices (though there's always the sword as a backup...)

side-tracked. At heart, many of these are variations on the "deliver-this-so-and-so" or "kill-such-and-such", but they're mostly portrayed in a more interesting fashion than is usual. NPC dia-

logue is limited in that, if you are properly role-playing your alignment, the conversation choice you should make is obvious. Though I should mention that many situations can be resolved with the tongue and not the sword. You

also need to monitor the characters in your party, ensuring that a balance is maintained between their desires and your own. Reign in that Chaotic Evil Thief once too often and they might just crack and do something both of you will regret. In this regard, *BG* is a real role-player's RPG.

It's a winner!

One of the game's great strengths is that there is always something for you to do, always some pressing matter at hand that requires your attention. It's also just a hell of a lot of fun just wandering the countryside, meeting new people, scalping some bandits, and exploring this wonderful land. A potentially problematic area is the AD&D system itself - that is, while it's accessible and uncomplicated in many ways, it's also idiosyncratic and unrealistic.

Personally,

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Most recent update (22 Jan 99): Advanced Dungeons & Dragons: *Monsters Hunter's Handbook*, Volume One (2791 KB) & *Monsters of the Abyss and Hoard of the Mongoose* (5401 KB). The first two armoured characters from *Monsters* (441 KB).

24th Anniversary News: Advanced Dungeons & Dragons: *Monsters Hunter's Handbook*, Volume One (2791 KB) & *Monsters of the Abyss and Hoard of the Mongoose* (5401 KB). To celebrate the 24th Anniversary of both the AD&D game and TSR, Inc., we're giving away special items. Instead of just temporary game add-ons, we're returning to the roots of role-playing games with a special gift for all our fans: a free download of the *Monsters* (441 KB) and *Monsters* (5401 KB) add-ons in the fantasy of the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* (441 KB).

<http://www.tsr.com/ADND/Welcome.html>

Learn all about Orcs and Ogres at the official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons site



although I like the low-level stats of AD&D (and *BG* promotes this with an experience point cap of 89,000), I feel there are superior RPG systems that have produced deeper and ultimately more satisfying CRPGs - *Fallout* being the most recent example - but the familiarity of the AD&D rules is a significant factor. Everyone has at least some passing knowledge of them, and even those who don't can pick up the basics pretty quickly. Overall, I think it makes for a decent system for a CRPG, especially when the end result is a game as approachable, playable and just damn entertaining as *Baldur's Gate*.

David Wildgoose

87%

Category RPG
Players 1-6 (Modem, TCP/IP, IPX)
Publisher Interplay
Price \$TBA
Rating M
Available Now

For Thoroughly enjoyable from start to finish. Supremely well designed and realised combat system. Lush visuals, music and effects. Nice interplay between characters.

Against Sometimes feels a little too combat-heavy (but the combat is brilliant anyway). Lacks the in-depth interaction of the classic Ultimas. AD&D itself lacks an in-depth and flexible skills system.

Need P166, 16MB RAM, 4xCD, 300MB HD
Want P200 MMX, 32MB RAM, 8xCD, 600MB HD



REDGUARD

Bethesda are great at intricate and involving storylines, it's just the mechanics of gameplay they have trouble with. Nothing has changed

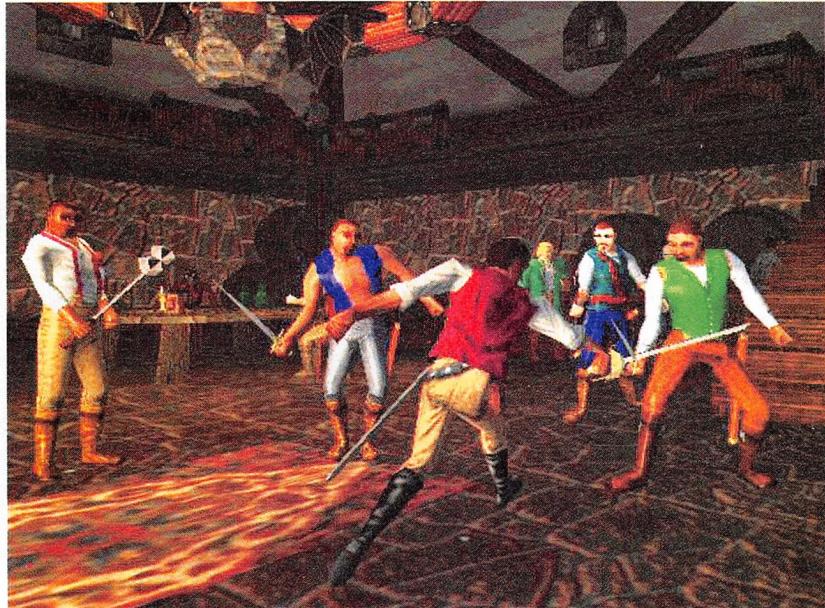
The Elder Scrolls series has something of a history in game circles. The previous game in the series, Daggerfall, was released by Bethesda in 1996. The action takes place in the Elder Scrolls universe on Tamriel, a mythical continent. These games were fairly straight down-the-line role playing games. Daggerfall, while not trying to be a Doom killer, suffered because it didn't offer much visually - its VGA graphics looked pretty awful compared to its SVGA contemporaries. The pity is that apart from some engine problems, Daggerfall was a very fine offering. Only recently have we seen the return of the RPG in titles such as Fallout and now online RPGs, like Ultima Online. Make no mistake - there is a strong following out there. It's interesting then, that just as we've seen the return of the RPG in recent years, Bethesda produce something quite different: Redguard is, strangely, NOT an RPG but an adventure title.

No stats

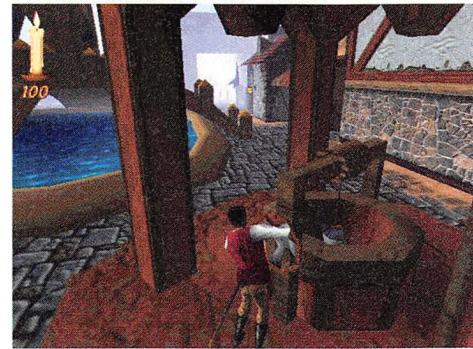
You heard right - it says Adventure on the box, and they mean it! A brave move perhaps, for a series with a strong following. Brave because of how very different this Elder Scrolls title is. Redguard uses almost no RPG features. You cannot choose or customise your character. There are no skill or experience points that change over time. You are



given your character, like it or lump it! So what's left I hear you ask? The narrative! The story! In the tradition of great fantasy, what is better than a rollicking good epic, with dragons & elves & magic & all that jazz? God bless Tolkien, whose particular brand of fantasy has had such an influence over fantasy writing and gaming ever since. With the intricate story, well-developed characters and themes of honour and valour,



Merrily clashing swords, the lads always enjoyed their Friday night at the Gentleman's club.



Redguard creates a very believable and engaging fantasy world.

Intricacies

The story occurs within a climate of unrest on Stros M'kai, an island of Hammerfell. The Cyrodiil empire has claimed

almost all of Tamriel, and was able to defeat the Redguards of Hammerfell only due to civil war in the country between the Crowns and the Forebears. The mysterious and untimely death of the

Redguard king caused this civil war. The empire allied with the Forebears to defeat the Crowns and the last stand of the Crowns took place on Stros M'kai. Once the Crowns were beaten, the empire simply took control of all of Hammerfell.

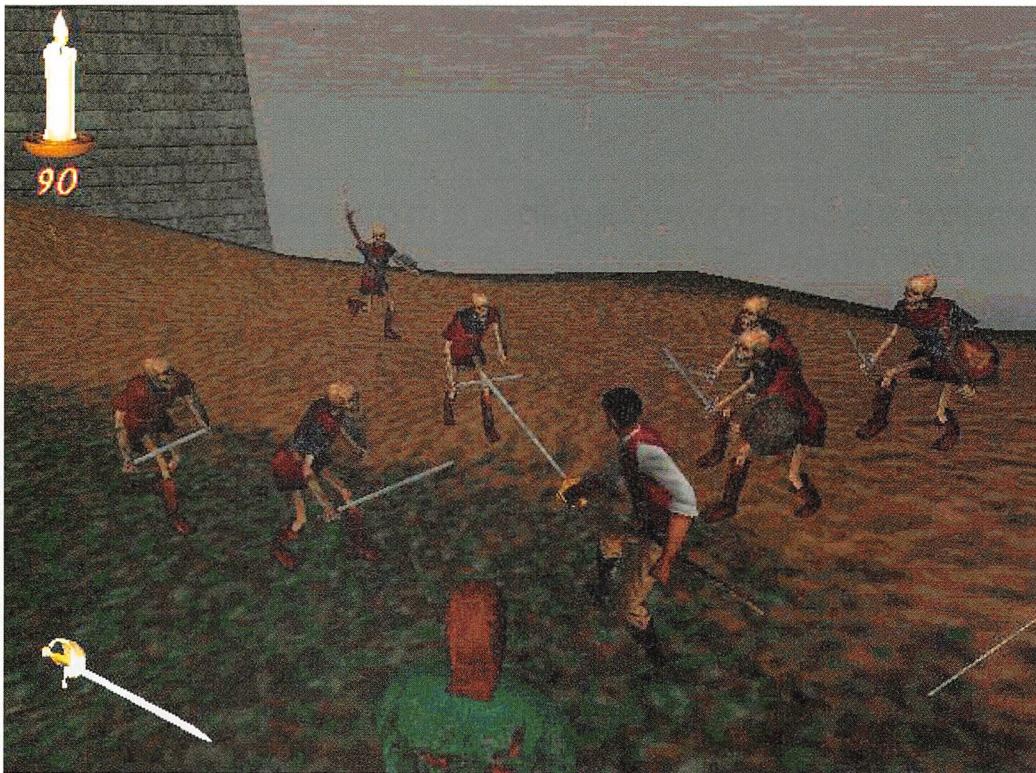
Disappearing sisters. Yay!

Against this background, your character, Cyrus, comes to Stros M'kai in search of Iszara, his recently disappeared sister. You discover she was a strong opponent of the empire and that her disappearance coincides with the disappearances of other Crowns on the island. There is great tension between many factions in Stros M'kai and there is much more to this involved situation than at first there seems.

Unimpressive breasts

The first thing you'll notice about Redguard is that the developers have used a third person 3D perspective. You look over the shoulder of your man, Cyrus, as he runs around Stros M'kai on his quest. This style of game brings the inevitable comparisons to Tomb Raider, a purely action game. Visually this is very beautiful, but I have to say that as far as the 3D world goes, it sucks! The 3D rendered world just isn't convincing. If a developer is going to choose such an obviously action-orientated style of play, they have to do a bit better than this in 1999.





Out of control

Control is another big problem. Movement doesn't feel that good at all and the controls are probably a little worse than Tomb Raider - how old is that game? When required to do difficult manoeuvres, like jump from a rope to a ledge, the controls are particularly unimpressive. This aspect of play is probably the poorest part of Redguard.

Chop or chat?

In the game, you have an all-purpose action button. From your inventory, you can use one selected item at a time, often your sword. Your action button is used to open doors or talk to people, as well as activate your selected item. This sounds just fine but sometimes I found

myself drawing my sword on someone, when I just wanted to talk to them! Quite a bad oversight, considering how easy it would have been to rectify.

Eh? What?

Conversation in the game also got me riled. Redguard relies particularly on conversation due to the strong narrative thrust of the game. So it's disappointing that more care wasn't taken in how communication was handled. Once you begin talking to someone, you are given a list of topics to discuss, which is just great. However, if you think you've heard enough from someone, you can't press a key to bypass the speech. This is particularly annoying when you're returning to a character to learn something new or when they just won't shut up!

Hack, yawn, slash

Sadly, combat is also rather lacklustre. This is mostly because of the terribly average controls I mentioned earlier. Duels are quite uninteresting and involve hacking-and-slashing at your slow, dim-witted enemies.

There are no health gauges to measure your progress. It's mad, passionate button hammering time and you only know that you've hit your enemy by their pained cries

and eventual collapse. It's not unbearable, just another straw on this camel's back.

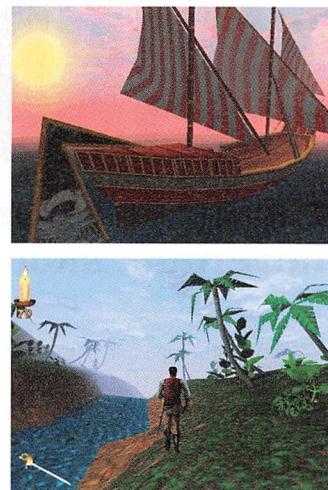
Buried treasure

But despite all of these faults, I still think this is a great game. Yes, Bethesda have made some bad decisions about Redguard but as they say, perseverance brings rewards. There's a fine game in here just waiting to get out! The real strength of Redguard is the depth of the narrative. So often we see games with most ridiculous of plots and there really is a place for good writing in games. Some of my personal favourite games have fantastic stories: Gabriel Knight, Abe's Odyssey, and the Monkey Island series - for these games and many others it is as much the narrative elements as the gameplay that entertains. If you can stick around long enough through the ghastly movement and combat, you'll find a complex and intriguing saga.

I've got you...

I get the feeling that Redguard is trying to be too many things. It fails as an action game but it has much to offer as an adventure narrative. Bethesda really should have done more with what is, on paper, a brilliant game. Instead, we have only a quite fine game. Give it enough time to get under your skin and you will really enjoy Redguard. Adventurers mourn what might have been!

John Dewhurst



(left) Those pesky undead...don't they ever learn!

PLUS+

NEWS STORY COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS SCREENSHOTS INSIDER FORUM DOWNLOADS LINKS BETHESDA

Redguard The Elder Scrolls IV: Redguard

IN STORES NOW OR ORDER DIRECT FROM US!

redguard.elderscrolls.com

78%

Category Adventure
Players 1
Publisher Bethesda Softworks
Price TBA
Rating G 8+
Available Now

For Great story, super music and atmosphere. A damn thick manual for reference.

Against It looks like an action game, but moves like a dog. Obvious problems with visuals and character interaction. Could have been SO much better...

Need P166, Win 95, SVGA video card, 16-bit sound card

Want 3D video card

3D SUPPORT

3Dfx supported



THUNDER BRIGADE

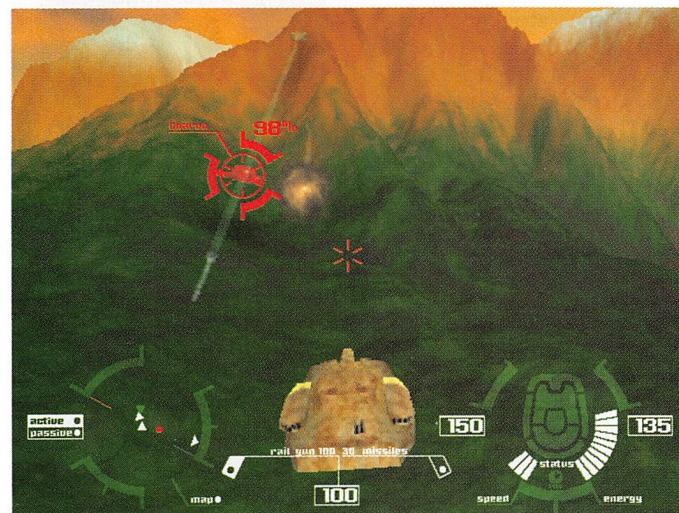
Finally, just what we've all been waiting for; a non accelerated 3D hovertank shoot em up! Rejoice!

When people talk about 3D action games, they immediately think of Quake or Half-Life. But there's a whole other side to 3D - games with spaceships, water craft and tanks to control in a realistic environment. Some are classics, like Descent or Tie Fighter, while some are so

unmemorable, you can barely remember their names. There's usually a big difference between the two, which is why Thunder Brigade is all the more intriguing. While it's by no means a classic, it is certainly not a bad game. I consider it a good game. It's quite an achievement to just be average, since but for a number of shortfalls, this could have been extraordinary.

Dark ages retro

A striking feature of Thunder Brigade is that there is "no 3D acceleration required!" For many gamers who don't have the latest hardware around, this is fine and good. But after installing the



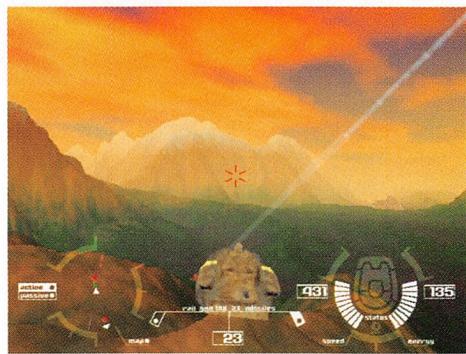
game, I realised what this meant: "No 3D acceleration at all". You heard it right - a 3D action game released in 1999 with no acceleration! I just can't fathom where the logic of this is. You might be making a great title for some people, but on the other hand, why deter thousands of prospective gamers from buying Thunder Brigade? It astounds me that the lads and lasses at Interactive Magic could make an overall fun and engrossing game and then fail to offer support for almost standard hardware. It just makes you wonder.

Galaxy far, far away

In Thunder Brigade, you are the pilot of a hovering tank. Yes, a hovertank in all its glory! The storyline concerns a whole mess of intrigue. It is some time in the future and the Earth Alliance has established colonies throughout the galaxies. Apparently, the Earth Alliance is a little tyrannical, so groups of rebels combine to form the United Systems. Not only that, but another colonial empire, the Halons, are hungry for new planets and colonies. So it's a three-way battle for the galaxy. You are a tank pilot of the United Systems People's Army. It's a good thing that U.S. is at the beginning of your name or you might sound a little too much like the Red Army or the P.L.O., eh? Let's leave that right there, shall we... In any case, the story is fairly peripheral. Like a true mercenary, all you need is a gun and a ship pointed the right direction.

Sorta stunning

Once you get your little hunk-of-bolts into the air, the action is really pretty convincing. The controls are fairly



Outrage! Thunder Brigade doesn't include 3D accelerator support, even as an option!

straightforward, as is common in action titles. For a game that has only software 3D rendering, the tank movement and visuals generally are impressive. The scenery is almost stunning - with snow-capped mountain ranges, moonscapes and beautiful sunsets - and despite the blocky appearance, the sense of motion within your craft is great. The thought of what this could have looked like using a 3D acceleration card, is too distressing to contemplate.





Relaxed pace

Being a tank, your vehicle is quite big and heavy, so it takes some doing to actually control it. It is the unique and (imaginably) authentic physics of the crafts in battle that offer the gameplay interest in Thunder Brigade. The combat in this type of game is necessarily slower and often more tactical than the speedy action of other FPS games. The enemy sort of creep up on you, in fact, everyone sort of creeps up on you! Just as in the less successful Fatal Abyss, the slower pace of Thunder Brigade make it distinctive. Indeed, the player needs to adopt a more particular style of play. One way is to make use of the terrain, which can offer protection when retreat is not an option or a chance to ambush an enemy. The nature of battle, calling on wits and invention, is where Thunder Brigade comes into the fore.

Big guns!

Obviously different tanks are used in different situations: stealth and battle tanks are good assault vehicles, while heavy tanks are good support or defensive units and the demolishers are heavy artillery that need escort. The weaponry and armour on your tank vary depending on the class of tank given to you for your particular

mission. The player has six types of weapons to use; HV rockets, rail guns, missiles, plasma cannons, designators and AT mines. There is enough variety in the game for the included 30 single player missions or for multiplayer, although it would seem to only play at a satisfactory rate over LAN.

Techno boppin'

There is one other great feature of Thunder Brigade; the music. I'm hard pressed to think of a recent game with a soundtrack of this quality. It's all suitably futuristic and has a nice house feel to it. The soundtrack of this game is much like the music from Wipeout 2097, which personally I think is a good thing. I just left the CD running after I'd finished playing the game, I enjoyed it so much.

Pity, that

On the surface, there is much going for Thunder Brigade. It's a pity then, that it looks like something produced a year ago. It's a shame to say it, but these days, gamers want good looks and some gameplay (often in that order!). I must admit I have a soft spot for this game,



The game is fairly slowly paced, which is not a bad thing. It's strange that Interactive Magic have gone for a thumpin' techno soundtrack, though



PLUS+

THUNDER BRIGADE
In Stores Now!
FLOAT LIKE A BATTLESHIP...
Sensor Suite
Laser Designator
Plasma Cannon
Missile Dragger
Hyper Velocity Rockets
Auto Regeneration
Armored
...STING LIKE A 50-MEGATON BEE!
Thunder Brigade is a lightning-paced Action/RPG set in a futuristic world of war and destruction. It's a game that's sure to impress.
Visit www.imagicgames.com/thunder/index.html

79%

Category 3D Action shooter
Players 1-8 (IPX/TCP/IP)
Publisher Interactive Magic
Price \$TBA
Rating G
Available Now

For Good old-fashioned action, nice soundtrack

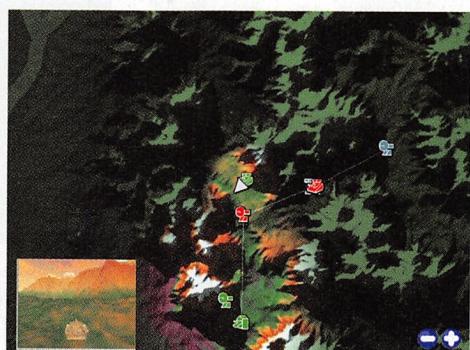
Against No 3D card support, multiplayer seems almost pointless over internet

Need Win9x, P100, 32MB RAM, 4MB video card, 4xCD

Want P200, 8xCD

3D SUPPORT

Software only!! Bah!



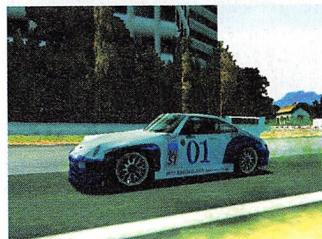
GRAND TOURING

It's not a serious sim, but it's also not quite an arcade racer. So what is it, then? It's mediocre, is what it is.

Soon most cars sold around the world will have some sort of built in breathalyser unit to stop drunk drivers taking to the road. Our 'Big Mother' Government has only just begun to worm its way into the back seat of your Torana. And before you can shout "Help, I'm being oppressed", cars will be fitted with all sorts of gadgets to stop you behaving in a manner that is counterproductive to healthy insurance company profits. Air bags will be fitted that inflate inside the drivers pants as soon as he or she emits a sound roughly resembling a wolf whistle, and shouts of "Show us ya map of Tassie!" will be met with a jet of hot water straight from the radiator to the drivers rectum. With such things as this to look forward to it's no wonder that more and more people are turning to the simulated driving experience as a saner option for their rites of passage into Australian society.

Pleasing fans

Grand Touring is, I think, Empire Interactive's first foray into the competitive racing sim market. They are more known for strategy and war games so this is quite a departure from their usual subject matter and as is to be expected from a first attempt it doesn't quite hit the mark. Empire have tried to have an each way bet on the sort of market that they would try and



Racing games are, like, cool, but it's nice when you know that it's either an arcade style game or a sim



sell this to and have come up with a title which follows the cliche: 'jack of all trades, master of none'. This is mainly because Grand Touring's physics model falls somewhere between hardcore simulation and arcade playing styles and Empire should have known that this would please fans of neither.

Powersliding Niki's

The overall feel of the game is somewhat similar to last years 'Motorhead' with design and execution more familiar to console owners than PC heads. The car handling is quite simplified, though a bit better than most arcade style racers. Because of this forgiving driving model it can be hard to judge corners accurately though, as your car only slides when you've completely lost it. You'll make a corner at a screamingly fast speed





but going a tiny bit faster in the next lap won't just make your tires screech a bit, it'll make you spin off the track. In other words it's virtually impossible to powerslide in this game and as it's possible to powerslide ANY real car if you want to, even a Niki, the physics are obviously not realistic.

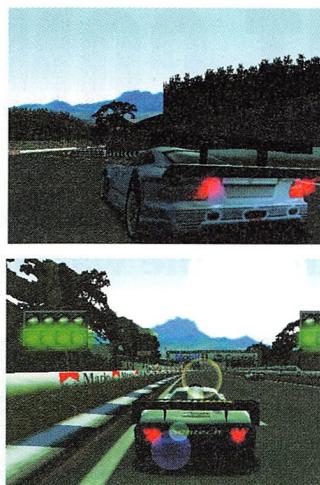
Forgetful

If you don't demand realism in your racing games this may not be a problem for you but unfortunately Grand Touring's

problems don't stop there. The most bizarre thing is the way in which the game deals with the player. It doesn't remember any of your settings or configuration and you literally have to set up the whole thing, sound, controllers, race preferences etc. every single time you run it! This may sound like a trivial point but believe me it gets VERY annoying after a while and the most annoying thing of all is that Empire actually did this - it really is a silly oversight

Moving violations

Another very bad oversight on the part of this game's developers is the way in which the cars change down gears. Sometimes the game takes a few seconds to catch up with what you're doing, leaving you wallowing around a corner at 60kph in fifth



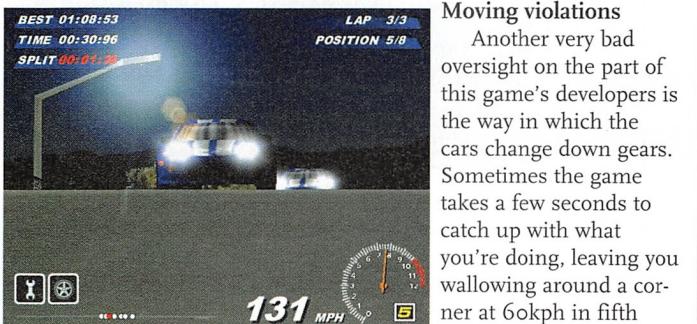
gear! From a drivers point of view this is the worst problem and will simply infuriate a lot of gamers who like to be given the chance to compete on an even footing, not to be held back by some silly programming error or omission.

Sluggy gluggy

Sound and graphics are acceptable though Empire have done something silly in not including any graphics options whatsoever in the game's options menu. If the game's a bit sluggish (which it is, unacceptably so on a P2 350) there's no way to adjust anything to make it better. What's worse, it crashed consistently when I ran it under my Diamond Voodoo2. Luckily it ran OK on my primary card.

If arcade racing is your bag then there are much better titles than this one around and if you like sims this ain't for you either.

George Soropos



Empire haven't been known for their driving games up until now, and it doesn't look like this will change

PLUS



www.empire.co.uk/gt/index2.htm

60%

Category Racing Sim
Players 1-8 (IPX)
Publisher Empire Interactive
Price \$TBA
Rating G
Available Now

For Forgiving physics make it easy for casual players

Against Very annoying interface, lack of graphics options and an unrealistic feel will turn off Sim fans. Unstable under some accelerator cards.

Need P166, 32 MB RAM, 4MB SVGA card, Win 95

Want P2 400, 64MB RAM, 3D accelerator (Matrox G200 and Riva TNT work best)

3D SUPPORT

D3D only

ANCIENT CONQUEST

Unburdened by modern warfare conveniences, Ancient Conquest recreates pure and simple warmongering.

Just when you thought every possible idea for a real time strategy game had been tried, when you found yourself actually looking forward to "Extreme Combat Orgasm Pension Day Massacre at the Commonwealth Bank" comes a game from South Australia all about ancient Greeks, Persians and the people they killed. Ancient Conquest makes an unassuming entry into a genre which seems to have calmed itself a little since the heady days of '97 when every second stand at E3 had an RTS on it. But that isn't to say that it won't make an impact.

The simple things

Moving into a market with so many experienced and powerful competitors is a risky move and rather than compete with the big budgets and production values of titles like Starcraft and Total Annihilation, Megamedia have chosen to concentrate on making a game which is fully optimised for the net and which works fast and smoothly on relatively low spec. machines.

The game is set in ancient times when the Greek and Persian navies opposed each other, and between them ruled the known world on the strength of their rams and ballistae. A time when Persians hadn't heard of the Tomahawk cruise missiles which are now spotted over their skies more often than some species of bird. A time when Greek men knew of women, but didn't fully understand what they were supposed to do with them. "Ah grand day is it not Dimitri, and look at all these beautiful women everywhere" "Yes Stavro, but don't you wish they'd all piss off so we can have a shag?"

Quick Lime Ship

As a game of naval warfare all your unit types are sea going ves-



Build boats. Click on boats. Click on enemy boats. Repeat.



sels and your settlements are always built in a harbour of some sort. There are only six main ship types with two extra special units for each race, and for some this will be a bit boring, particularly TA heads used to having a hundred different units. But they aren't static designs and can be improved over time as you research new materials and techniques. The ship designs each have a specific function: Rammers are equipped for blud-

geoning other ships to death while Boarders are adept at launching troops directly against other vessels. There is also the Ship Killer, Man Killer, Bomber and Royal Ship, as well as the two special classes for each race: Fire Ship and Quick Lime Ship for the Greeks and the Fire Rammer and Ship of the Dead for the Persians. They are upgraded by researching new armour and weapon technologies in your township in one of your three research buildings.

Your new technology comes from either a workshop, sage school or smithy, the only research buildings in the game. While your troops come from your settlement building. Constructing one or more of the temple buildings will give you access to magic spells as well. These spells are very handy for doing things like making a whirlpool to suck up your opponents ships or to protect your own from attacks. As well as a bit of magic Ancient Conquest also has magic items and heroes, which gives it a bit of a 'Heroes Of Might And Magic' feel. The



Heroes bestow special abilities on the ship or fleet they are in command of and can only be attracted to your cause by first finding the appropriate special item (eg. the Magic Oar for Jason of the Argonauts) Just to

make things interesting there are also sea monsters of old scattered about the seas and it's important to be ready for surprises.



Fishy business

What about resources I here you cry? They come in two forms: Amber and Fish. Amber is your currency and is needed to build vessels, conduct research and most other things. Fish is mainly essential for troop production but is also needed for construction of most things (to feed the workers I suppose) There are two ship types specifically designed for gathering these things, the Ship and the more capable Merchant Ship. They can't be upgraded however and it's wise to keep an eye on them.

If on-line play is the way you prefer to go, Ancient Conquest will give you fast trouble free gameplay as this is what it's all about. The game was developed closely with people in the on-line gaming business and that expertise has lead to a great multiplayer RTS. If fast, stable and addictive on-line gaming is what you want then Ancient Conquest could be what you need, after all what could be more thrilling than being rammed by a boat full of sweaty Greek sailors?

George Soropos



Sure, there's not an awful lot that's actually new here and neither are the graphics anywhere close to good, but it's still kinda fun

PLUS+



79%

Category RTS
Players (LAN, TCP/IP)
Publisher Gremlin
Price TBA
Rating G
Available Now

For Purpose built for internet play and works very well, simple yet addictive gameplay and a nice feel, low system requirements.

Against Having only one main type of military unit makes it a bit repetitive, if you don't have an ISP and a desire to play on-line you won't get the most out of this game.

Need P133, 16Mb RAM, 2X CD, Win95/98

Want P166, 32Mb RAM, 16X CD

BURNOUT CHAMPIONSHIP DRAG RACING: Player's Choice Edition

Really long title, really short races

You wouldn't think the sport of drag racing was very involved, would you? Get a beefy car, slip on your stackhat and scream down an open road against some other similarly silly guy. You need only take one look at all the options available in the preparation of your vehicle to realise that these kinds of people spend a hell of a lot of time with cars. Here for the discerning driver is Burnout Championship Drag Racing: Player's Choice Edition. In other racing games, the technical side of proceedings is kept to a minimum, but in Burnout, the idea is that at least half of the game is spent under the hood of your car.

My little Deuce Coupe

You begin by choosing your favourite vehicle and they're all here: '55 Chevy, '66 Ford Mustang and my favourite, the Champion Rail Car (you know, the crazy long ones), with 20 in total. Then you can go to the workshop and customise damn near everything! Take for example the engine. Here's an abridged list of what can be modified: induction, manifold, fuel, header, head/port, valve diameter and camshaft. This is apart from the transmission, tyres and suspension, with all their whirly-

gigs and such. You can even paint your wagon - all the colours of the rainbow! You might be out of your depth with many of the options, so it's a good thing there's a detailed manual that leads you through all of it.

Ready, set...gofinish!

As it turns out, there's a lot more to the actual drag race than meets the eye. Burnout uses Bracket Racing and this allows any two vehicles to race, even if one is far more powerful than the other. At the beginning of the race, you roll up to the starting grid, doing burnouts (hence the name) to warm your tyres, improving traction. You line up with your opponent and when your respective lights go off - you roll! The actual racing isn't too bad, but it's not as fantastic as you'd expect for what is REALLY fast driving. Using 3D acceleration, this didn't blow me away like I thought it would.



No chicks on grids

It's fun for the first hour or so, as you get used to anticipating the lights (or Christmas tree, as they are called), seeing the feel of different vehicles and engines. But the races are short and become progressively more lacklustre. The rest of the game is almost hobby territory - tweaking and fidgeting with figures to get that perfect car - it's too much like pen & pencil RPGs, or Dick Smith electronic kits for me. Developers need to work a lot more on getting the speed and excitement of drag racing onto the screen to justify the technical side. Otherwise there isn't much to attract a more general audience.

D'you like drag?

On much of the gaming population, the intricacies of drag racing will be lost. This one is purely for the petrol heads. Burnout is a good racing simulation but wouldn't recommend this to anyone who didn't have a BIG thing about cars. The network options are perfect for this type of game and probably Burnout's biggest draw card. It's horses for courses and in this case, big powerful horses that run straight ahead, really really fast and have parachutes...

John Dewhurst



Vroom vroom! Tinker tinker! Tinker Tinker! Fix Fix! Optimise Optimise! Test test! Swear swear! Tinker tinker! Ah bugger it, that'll do... Vroom vroom!

70%

Category Racing Sim
Players 1 to 32 (IPX, TCP/IP, Direct Connect)
Publisher Bethesda Softworks
Price \$59.95
Rating G
Available Now

For Network option makes this the drag racing title of choice. The opportunity to fiddle with every damn thing in an automobile. If too much racing is barely enough...

Against Very technical and racing isn't enthralling enough for the average Joe - for racing aficionados only! Anyone remember "The cars that ate Paris"?

Need P75, 16MB RAM

Want P166, 3D acceleration

3D SUPPORT

3Dfx supported



PLUS+

The world's first drag racing can just get better... *BURNOUT CHAMPIONSHIP DRAG RACING: Player's Choice Edition* (PC) is the latest addition to the ever growing list of racing games. It's the first racing game to come from BETHESDA, the world's first and most successful PC game developer. In addition to the award-winning Burnout Championship Drag Racing, PC includes highly requested features such as a networked racing mode, a workshop editor, various engine options, fully customisable sounds and much, much more!

BURNOUT CHAMPIONSHIP DRAG RACING: Player's Choice Edition lets you start from scratch and build your own dragster. You can choose from scratch, peel out from the starting line, and leave your competitors in the dust. You've never played a racing game like this, we've never seen a dragster motorway in the world. Prepare to feel the speed, the thrill and the power of the world's first drag racing game for the PC.

Click the icons below for a sneak peek into Burnout Championship Drag Racing:

20 cars, including classic American muscle & vintage cars, Fire-Stock, Funny cars and Stock cars. See the pages of *Hot Rod Magazine*.

20 tracks based on authentic locations including NHRA.

Every aspect of the car, from engine, transmission, tires, suspension, and aerodynamics, can be customized to create your dream car.

Using the 32 channels of telemetry data to "break" your

www.bethsoft.com/burnout/thegame.html

WCW NITRO

Head out to where the big boys play, where the only rules are that you that you have to follow the script, and you have to lose if you're the bad guy!

Professional wrestling occupies that twilight zone of an almost-sport. WWF and WCW matches have many features that could cause a viewer to confuse them with sport: There is a referee and some kind of rules, participants are obviously extremely fit individuals and two or more line up against one another in tournaments and championships. But anyone with half their wits about them knows that professional wrestling is as choreographed as a Spice Girls concert; as staged as a Broadway musical. For some of us, this translates to: "what a crock of effluent! That wrestling's just silly...", but there are many, many wrestling fans around the world. That kind of interest means there will always be demand for wrestling games.

Gameplay bodyslammed

WCW Nitro is the newest wrestling title released by THQ. You take control of the biggest names in the WCW and battle it out in various modes of play: exhibition, tournament, 2-player tag team, Battle Royale and others. There is the option of network play, as well, giving the wrestling gamer all they'd need. It's a pity, then, that the game itself is so uninspiring.

It's Shakespearean!

Once you step into the ring, you come face to face with a most pedestrian combat experience. You and your opponent amble up and down, in and out the ring, slapping and kicking each other. The slapping goes on until someone is able to pull off a throw or special move. What is so disappointing is that you are denied the real fun of wrestling - the gratuitous and unnecessary violence, the Shakespearean style tragedy, the melodrama of a Made For TV movie, and the sophisticated humour of a Carry On film. If you are outside the ring, you can't pick up bins or chairs (or innocent bystanders) to pummel your opponent with (which is a standard feature of

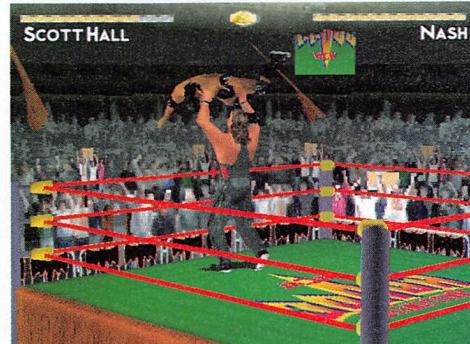
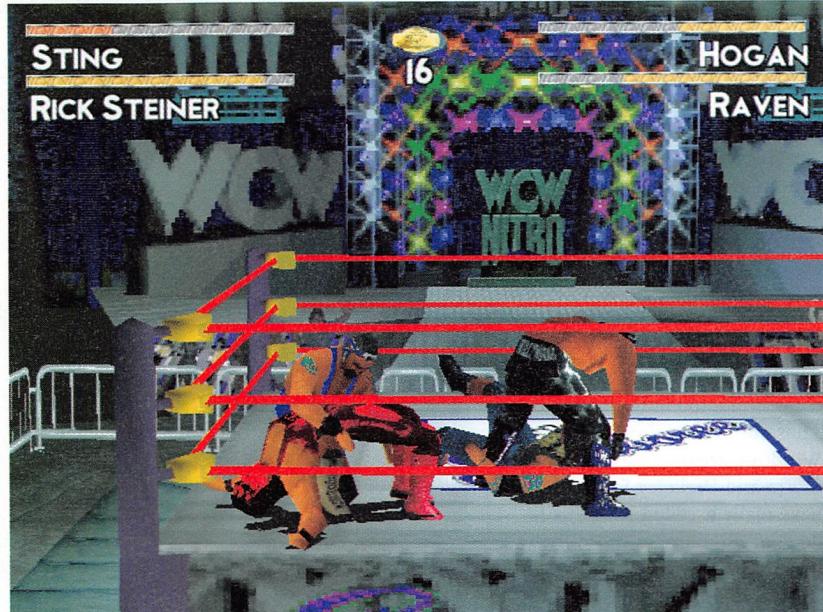
wrestling). The only surprise comes when another wrestler runs out and lends a hand to a pummeled teammate. But even this just highlights a major gameplay problem: you have no control over who your wrestler faces, if there are three or more wrestlers in the ring.

54 wrestlers hiding?

Gameplay is really quite average and dull, and lacks the zing found in other fighting titles, namely Japanese arcade games. It is a different style of game, of course but who would choose this over Virtua Fighter? Very few. The PC has not been known for its fighting games. The action is so uninspiring in WCW Nitro that the developers are just helping to prove the PC is wrong for these games. The options don't expand play and some of them are plain useless. It's certainly in the menus, but I'm damned if I could even save a game! You are promised over 60 wrestlers but start out with only 16. I can't believe that there would be 54 hidden characters, even if there are it seems like a colossal scam to me.

Don't do drugs, kids

Imagine any arcade fighting game (Virtua Fighter, Street Fighter) and think about what makes it enjoyable: exciting, impressive combat between characters of varying abilities. Now remove these things and you have WCW Nitro. In spite of my high personal opinion of professional wrestling (it may be fake and scripted, they may be hard core long term steroid abusers,



There's so much potential in the wrestling game market. No really, they can be great fun. This aint.

52%

Category Wrestling sim
Players 1-2 (IPX, TCP/IP)
Publisher THQ
Price TBA
Rating G
Available Now

For Wrestling with all the WCW big names! Rock'n'Roll soundtrack from hell!

Against Gamers who enjoy any other fighting games need not look here. Boring gameplay. Very average controls. Rock'n'Roll soundtrack from hell!

Need P166, 16MB RAM, SVGA video card

Want P200, 32MB RAM, Direct 3D compatible card

3D SUPPORT

3Dfx, D3D & Software

PLUS+



www.usawrestling.org - Take a look at wrestling that doesn't need chairs or poor acting. Boring, innit.

AFTER DARK GAMES

It's like a screensaver, right, but it's also a game. Kooky!

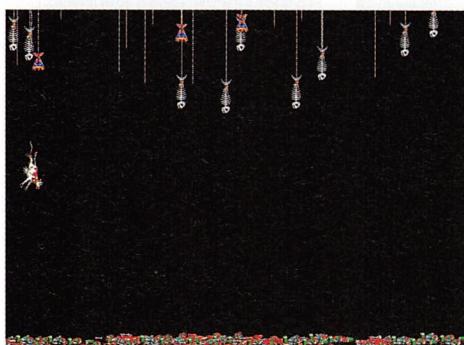
Developer: Sierra

Price: \$TBA

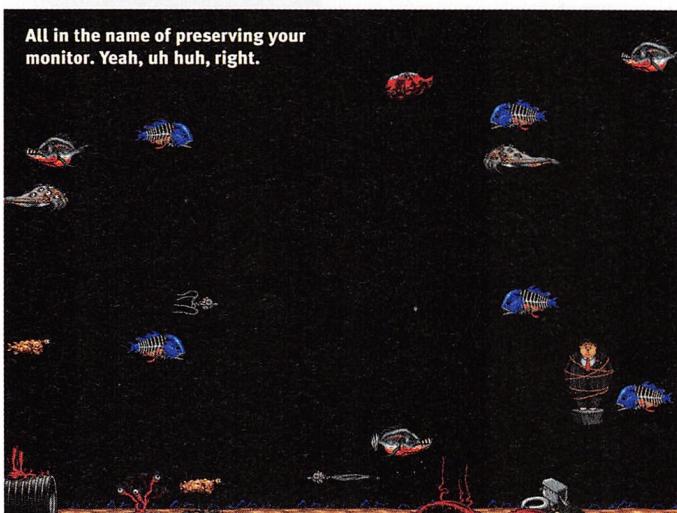
You may have worked out by now that this writer seems to have something of a fetish for silly little games that keep you up until 3:30am without ever once going to the toilet. Food, too, can be neglected if the game is of a particularly high addiction level. The actual quality and contents doesn't have to be phenomenal, just a nice healthy dose of things that you don't have to concentrate too hard on to play. Those built in games in Windows are one example, but Sierra and Berkeley Systems have really excelled with this little gem. Remember those flying toasters? And those cute Hula Twins? Well, they now star in their own set of games, including everything from Solitaire to Mooshu tiles to keep you up, er, after dark (heh heh. Sorry).

Included all on the one disc are 11 games, including:

* Roger Dodger: an imitator to the classic and ever popular Pac-Man
* Mowin' Maniac: another Pac



All in the name of preserving your monitor. Yeah, uh huh, right.



styled game, except you have to mow the lawn

* Hula Girl: a weird platformer
* Zapper: a yes/no quiz game
* Toaster Run: get the toaster to pick up bread and objects, and put baby in the crib to win

* Foggy Boxes: Which is that classic game you played in high school-land with the dots you join into boxes
* Roof Rats: This writer's addictive favourite, where you join up the squares and drop them to get all the characters off



the roof.

Each of these games are colourful and aimed at a younger market, while some of the other games are slightly educational (Gasp!). These include Fish Shtick, where fishes float past with a letter on them that form a word, and Bad Dog 911 where you are given a set of 6 letters to spell as many words as possible from. Plus it also includes a built in screen saver, which "subtly" urges you to choose a game. The games in themselves are simple enough with large block graphics and a standard annoying elevator music styled soundtrack. This one truly is a diversion.

The actual characters are drawn from both the new After Dark 4.0, and also Sierra's other

attempt at expanding the name, Totally Twisted After Dark Screen Saver, which replaces those flying toasters with Flying Toilets, the Aquarium gets a dude in concrete shoes dropped in, and Bungee Roulette - watch daredevils, cows and fish bungee to their death (when the cow hits the ground, the bits turn into burgers and hot dogs, the fish into sushi). The Twisted version also includes Mime Hunt, and Mike's So Called Life, which both have their own tiles on Mooshu, as do most of the characters and icons from both After Dark and Totally Twisted. So if you want a little diversion for your PC, check this one out.

Agata Budinska



LEGO

And in each Lego game box, there's a Lego toy. Too good!

Developer: Krisalis

Publisher: Hasbro

Price: \$TBA

I personally remember as a child thinking that the best toy, better than He-man and Barbie put together was Lego. Between my brother and myself we had amassed quite a pile of bricks. We even had the biggest spaceship, the Lion Crest Castle, and the Lego airport. It was so cool, it had these planes where the lid opened up and you could put the passengers inside, and even a little chute for the luggage!! Our parents even once took us to the Lego Centre in Birkenhead Point (sadly now gone) where I saw my first electronically operated Lego Train.

Macho Macho Lego!

But Lego has changed a lot since I was a child. Pieces are now custom made for the particular set. Lego people have facial hair! Or sunglasses! I mean really, what if you need an extra mother figure, and the only head you have left has a Village People-esque moustache? The

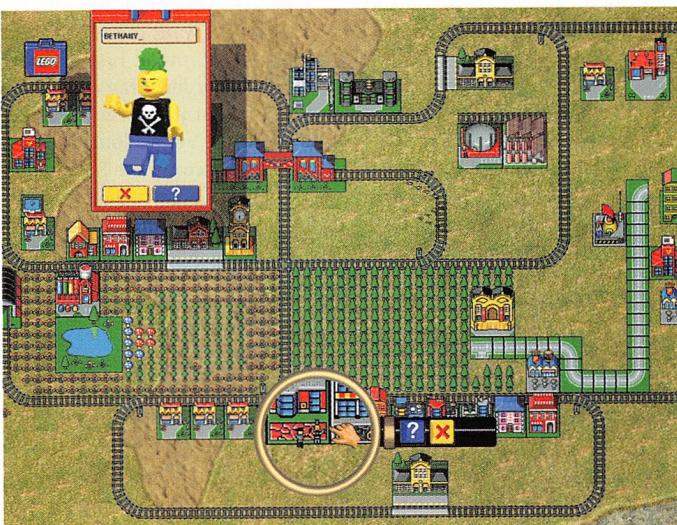
other problem was when you wanted to make a new car but you could only find three wheels. What is a child supposed to do? That's where the new series of Lego comes in, with Creator, Loco, and Chess.

Hey! Lego my arm!

Lego Chess has taken on an interesting theme. Choose between the Wild West or the Pirates, and within the two, Cowboys or Indians, or Sailors and Pirates. Each takes on the board with war on their minds, as each piece is now either a pawn, bishop, knight, rook, Queen or King. The game teaches the youngsters to play chess with its animation and guided tutorials. When taking a piece on the set, a mini battle is launched, the sequence changing every-time. Lego Chess is also setup for Internet hookups for those that would like to test their skills against another remote person.

Bricks! Lots of them!

Lego Creator answers the problem faced by any one whose ever been into Lego, and



Why? Because: is Lego is good. As they say.

that is bricks. You can never run out of bricks. And they can be any colour you like. And you don't ever lose the petals to the flowers. These may seem like little things to a non Legoer, but damn, it plagued many childhoods that I knew of. Creator allows you to build your own, or choose a pre built model, to create your own Lego world. Fill it with Lego People, and hit Play, and watch the world come to life. The controls can take a very long time to get used to, but the graphics are good, as is the animation. All individual pieces are available to you, as are sirens, roads, and for the brat in us all, dynamite bricks. Really, what's the point of building it if you can't pull it down again?

Choo Choo!

Lego Loco, what can I say? This one really appeals to the child within. I always wanted a Lego train set, and dammit, I still do. This program allows you to build a town with set pieces, then put down tracks and build trains. This one is aimed for the younger generation and is incredibly easy to use. The sprites are large and the icons easily understandable. The object of the game, besides making a cool town and train set, is to make postcards with Lego things on them and send them on the red mail carriage to the Post Office. Once hooked up to the net, you can even send these postcards to your friends.

Agata Budinska

REDSHIFT 3

**View the end of the world!
Watch the beginning of the
Earth! See God! Well, probably,
anyway**

Developer: DK Multimedia

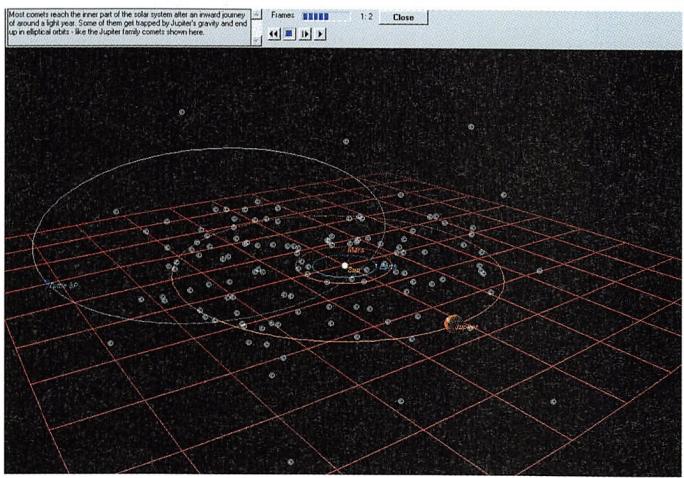
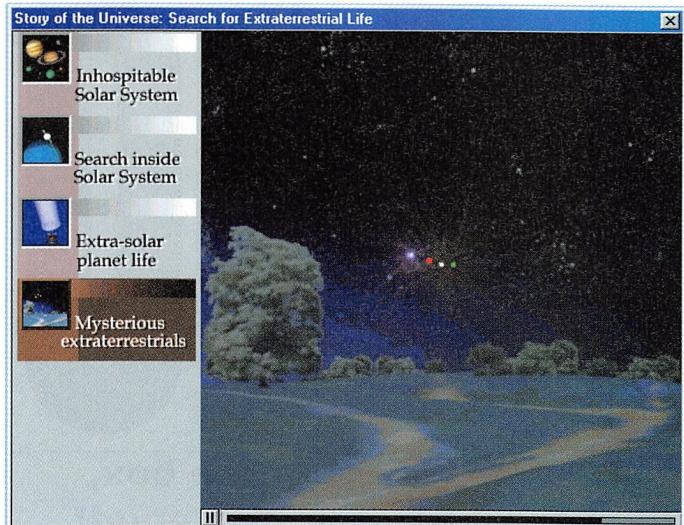
Have you ever experienced a solar eclipse? Ever wanted to? From Mars? Have you always been keen on sitting in the dark for long hours looking at the sky with a telescope at the tiny dot that may just well be the Armagedon comet coming to take this planet out? Have you ever wanted to keep tabs on said comet but have a hot date that night but don't want to miss any changing detail? Sound like you? Meet Redshift.

Developed by DK Multimedia, this is the complete and utter guide to Astronomy as we know it. Watch various phenomena that have taken place throughout

the ages. See what the sky looked like the day you were born. Checkout when the next eclipse, or the next conjunction of planets will occur. This has it all.

Heeelp me!

The format is like that of any other Windows based program, and this can at times be a little daunting. Not knowing what the hell you are trying to do can put a person off. But with a good introduction and a guided walk through, anyone could have this baby customised to their needs and skills. A helpful addition is its link to the Penguin Dictionary of Astronomy site online, in case you come across a word you've never heard before.



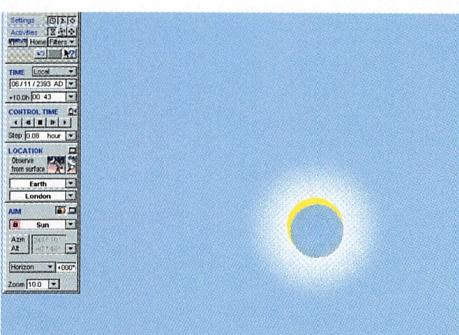
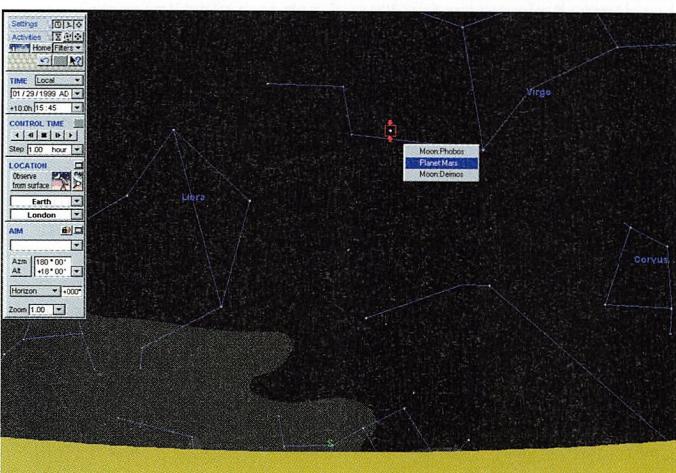
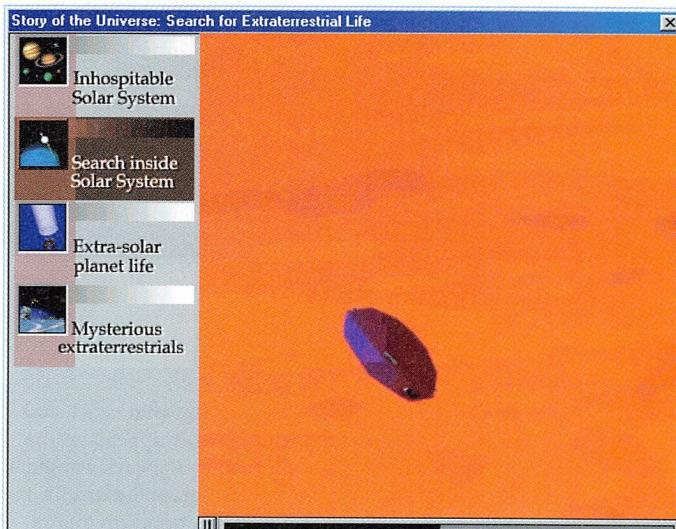
Witness the majesty of nature represented as a couple of dozen dots. Should I be moved to tears now? Just say when...

What, where, when. Why?

The graphics are quite blocky, but this allows for the various directions you can view from to be manipulated. Working on a basis of what do you want to see, from where, at what time, they need to be a little flexible. The 'where' can be anywhere from the Earth's surface to any planet in our Solar System, or even the moon. The 'What' can be anything from constellations in the sky, Star Systems, Eclipses, Nebulas, and Quasars. Click on any dot on a star map and it will tell you that star or planet's name. The 'When' can be any time in our past, present, or future. View the stars as they were 4000 years ago, or how they will be in 2221 AD.

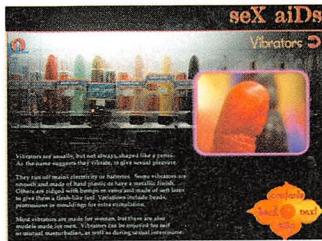
Big bang: BANG!

The compendium includes comets and other phenomenon that can be constantly updated on the internet. It also includes animated stories, explaining the Big Bang Theory, double stars and orbits in our solar system. Another animated feature is the movie recorder. Say you've been playing around and you've found the perfect view of a solar eclipse to take place in the year 2243 AD. By setting the time on again, you watch the computer generated version of the event, but say you want to see it again and again. Simple! Just click on Movie Recorder, drag the frame around what you want to see, and record. Viola! Your own copy of the complete Solar



eclipse on the 16th May 2243 AD! This means you get to see it, and other phenomenon, even if that comet does come and completely wipe out this Planet!

Agata Budinska



No kids, we don't know what that funny looking thing is either...

SPRINT SOFTWARE CELEBRITY SERIES

Multimedia, Australian style!

Developer: Sprintsoft
Price: Too much, however much it is

New from Sprint Software, The Celebrity Series of Multimedia CD Roms! A set of CD's with, ahem, big name celebrities attached? You

tell yourself it couldn't be. But it is! Call this number now, and here's what you'll receive!

The cooking channel

Here's Ken James, he's that guy off various midday Lifestyle programs, made famous for his infomercial style ads (and doesn't he do them well!). He's got

an interactive cookbook! Hmm, Ken James World Cuisine Recipe Book. Look, the recipe for Vegetable Pizza Puff! I thought it was only available on the back of Puff Pastry packs! Boy, am I glad to be wrong!

This Desktop recipe book is brought to you by Schwartz. How do we know this? Because

most recipes call for Schwartz spices, and of course, the recipes are taken out of the Schwartz cookbook. But that's cool, you can add your own cook book to the system! So handy!

Shame, shame, shame

But the action doesn't stop there, next up is Derryn Hinch's

Crossword compendium. This addition means we don't have to fork over the cover price of trashy mags just for the crosswords inside (at least, that's why you tell your friends you get them). There are 486 crosswords in all to complete, with scoring, by yourself or with a friend. Joy! Thanks Derryn!

Don't call it a comeback

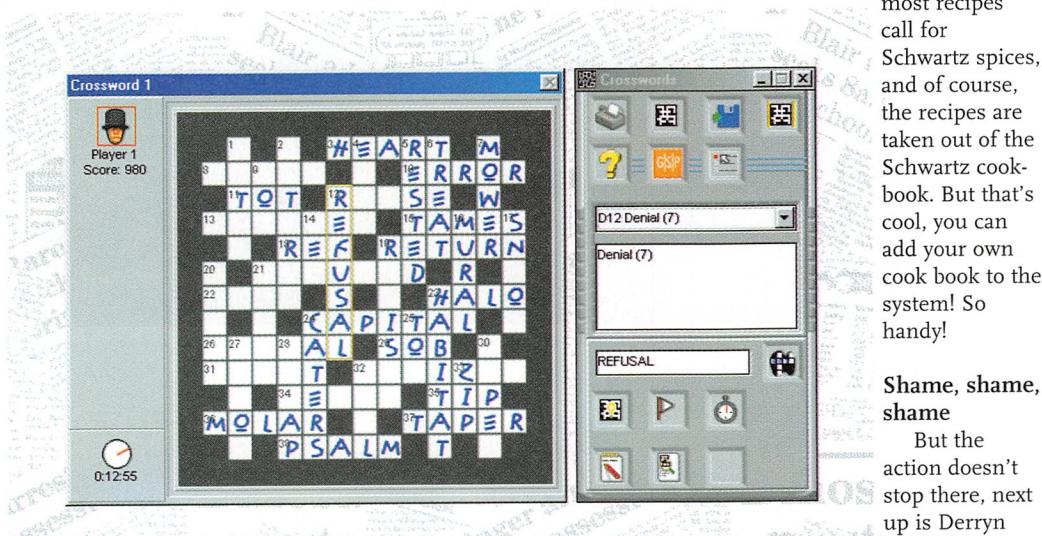
Pay by credit card and you'll also receive Pat Cash Tennis Coach. That's right, the Australian Hero of tennis in the 80's is going to help YOU improve your tennis, with some help from his coach, and lots of footage of Pat hitting the ball around in training, tournaments, and of course in his youth. By watching Pat do everything right, you'll pick it up in no time, all it takes is "A lot of hard work". Watch Pat volley a ball, then run out on the court and try it yourself! And don't forget to practice your drop shot. You'll be playing like a pro in absolutely no time, or your money back! Er, no, strike that last bit.

...But were afraid to ask

Order in the next 30 minutes and you'll also receive Dr Feelgood Boosts Sex. Brought to you and presented by the woman who asked Warwick and Joanne Capper about their sex life on national TV (love is beee-youuuu-diful!!!). Join her as she takes you on a tour of sexually transmitted diseases, sex toys, oral sex, masturbation, the differences between the sexes, contraception, sex during pregnancy and many other things to get you confident and geared up for your next experience. Let Dr Feelgood and her team show you what it can be like!

But hurry, this offer is not to be repeated! Call Now!! Or run away! Very fast! If you have an ounce of sense!

Agata Budinska





the Falcon 4.0 phenomenon

SETUP ■ COMBAT TIPS ■ OPTIMISE YOUR PC ■ MULTIPLAYER HELP

It's big, it's beautiful, and there's a heap under the hood. Major Ian continues his investigation into one of the best flight sims ever

Hands up all of us that have upgraded after loading Falcon 4.0 (F4) in January and February this year! I know I have, and what's more, as we promised, PC PowerPlay have secured an exclusive interview with Mr Scott Randolph, Lead Graphics Engineer for Falcon 4.0 at MicroProse/Hasbro Interactive.

First off the Runway - MiG 29

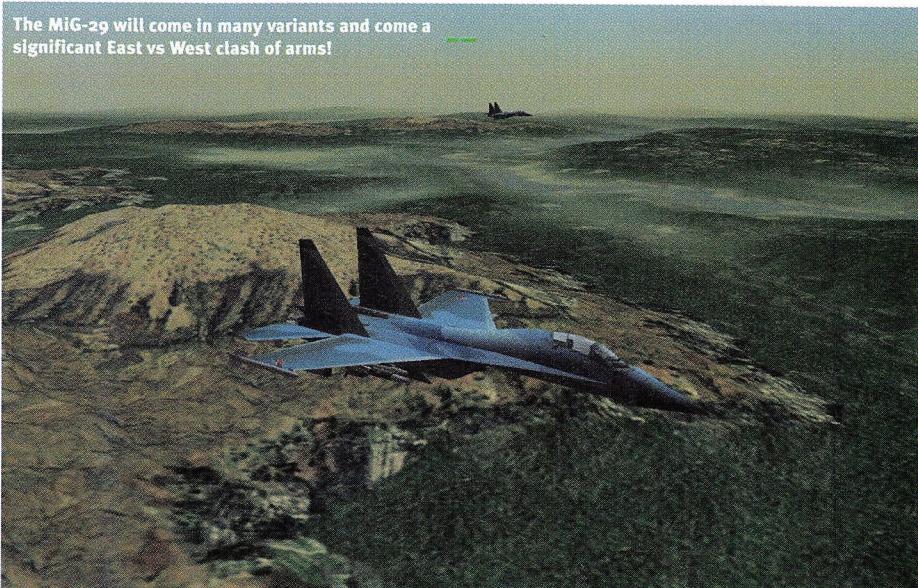
That drop down menu below the Korean Peninsula Map in most of the primary menus really isn't just there to tease us - Bosnia Herzegovina here we come! What's more, it's not just a new mission area, but a multi-dimensional addition to the game with a release date of October 1999.

Scott Randolph wouldn't let slip on the scenario behind this first mission disk, other than it will bring a plethora of European air and ground forces into the game. He did indicate that the Balkan Mountains would bring us high altitude terrain and very dense forests. The mission disk will bring a clash of East vs West in terms of nations in the conflict, and a number of MiG 29 variants will be flyable beginning with the original MiG29A and moving to the MiG-29SE.

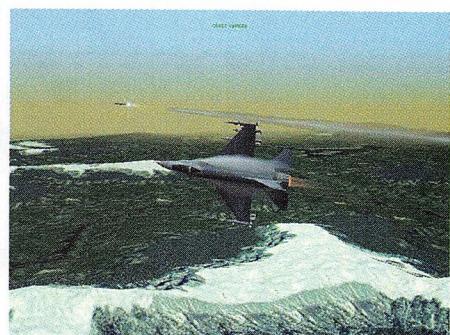
Second off the Runway - F/A 18E

Early in 2000 we'll see another world hot spot incorporated in F4. China vs Taiwan; or if you will, the People's Republic of China (China) vs the Republic of China (Taiwan). Confused? That's why it's a world hot spot! Quick History lesson. In 1949, the Chinese Communists forced the former Nationalist Government off mainland China and onto Taiwan. Hence the creation of the Republic of China. With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, US President Harry S. Truman ordered the US Seventh Fleet to protect Taiwan against Chinese communist attack.

To this day, the People's Republic of China has been unwilling to renounce the use of force against Taiwan, which it sees as



Carrier landings



High Altitude Terrain

province of the mainland and maintains 3,000,000 soldiers on active duty, and 1,000,000 soldiers in reserve forces. On the other hand, the Republic of China maintains significant anti-shipping missile capabilities, a fleet of its own frigates, new anti-submarine helicopters, early warning aircraft, and high-performance fighters as deterrence. So the second mission disk will see a dramatically increased role of naval aviation and naval surface warfare, and specifically carrier-based operations with the F/A 18E.

What Else?

There's also firm talk of an F14 Tomcat and/or F15 Strike Eagle mission disk well into 2000. If these get off the drawing board they will certainly have two playable cockpits, one for the pilot and one for the Weapons Systems Officer! Voice communications would also be added to the game to give a capability similar to Roger Wilco as described in PCPP's February Edition of Net Gaming News.

Integration

A significant factor in the longevity of this game is that any expansion to F4 will be 100% interoperable. This includes Dog Fight, Tactical Engagement, and Campaign. Moreover, for each game type, players will be able to choose either cooperative or adversarial operations.

There's also talk of investigating the integration of the air war with the surface ground and sea war, but only if it's feasible! The game engine communications infrastructure, which allows data sharing among many machines, theoretically permits the inclusion of an Aegis Cruiser, a main battle tank or SAM commander element in the Electronic Battlefield Series. The problem is, how long would a player have to sit around waiting for a jet to fly past, or another surface combatant in F4's dynamic campaign? These are some of the issues MicroProse will have to think through before committing to such a concept.





People's Republic of China (China) on the left versus the Republic of China (Taiwan) on the right! Who will win, and how will US forces effect the balance of power in the region?



The Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) Class Frigates would be deployed with US aircraft carriers to maintain sovereignty on The Republic of China (Taiwan)



The Republic of China's HSIUNG FENG II anti-ship missile. Guidance: active radar & infra red terminal homing, Range: 90 miles, Speed: 650 mph sea-skimming cruise and terminal guidance, Warhead: 1,530 lbs. Taiwan's decision to deploy Hsiung Feng II coastal defence missiles has caused the most important increase of tension between the two countries in years

How "Real" is Falcon 4?

Good question! Can "less than friendly" nation states spend \$89.95 out of their defence budget and gain access to a "degree" of western avionics technical data and air combat methodology? Well, yes and no. MicroProse obtained freely available official data, matched it with detail in trade magazines and extrapolated from pictures. But still, some of their guesses were a little too close for the US Department of Defense, and they were forced to change some details originally planned for the game's avionics suite. So no, you can't obtain the real performance envelope or specifics on the acquisition distance of an AMRAAM by buying the game! But it comes damn close!

Feedback from Gamers?

Well, there are plenty of opinions out there, and the world would be a sad place



Free to press photographs also helped the game designers

indeed if we all held the same opinion on everything! But generally, most gamers appear to love the depth and attention to detail of F4. MicroProse are finding that gamers are gaining significant enjoyment from leaning about air, ground and sea aircraft and weapons systems. They are also commenting favourably on the rich environment, and the graphics that are so close to what a real F16 driver sees from the cockpit.

Sure, there have been some glitches found now in the software, and patches are addressing this as soon as MicroProse can get them posted on www.falcon4.com. But by and large, the gaming community seems to understand the complexity of F4, and has stuck with MicroProse as it solves the inevitable glitches.

MicroProse Shareholders?

F4's completely non-linear campaign differs from the typical sequential missions and campaigns found in most sims. We asked the delicate question, "Did this major departure

from conventional game design cause concern with your investors; especially considering the very long development period?"

The response was Yes! The whole story is very long and complicated and saw significant management and personnel changes during development. This stretched everyone's patience and confidence. But the proof is in the pudding so to speak! And MicroProse and hundreds of thousands of gamers worldwide are very happy with the end product.

Insight to the Future

What an insight into the future development of the F4 gaming engine and interface! This should keep you lined up on the taxiway, hands on throttle and stick, ready to crash past 100% Military Power and hone your F4 skills! MicroProse will keep us on the bleeding edge of gaming entertainment as part of the F4 Electronic Battlefield Series well into 2000 and beyond!



Three different F16 flights all lining up for takeoff. Keep those hands on throttle and stick! Brace yourself for the ever-changing virtual world of the Falcon 4 Digital Battlefield Series

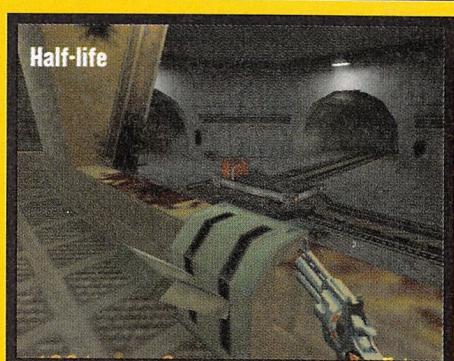
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Plus, we give you bonus cheats and game advice! Each FAX-ON-DEMAND has been carefully designed to look good and be readable regardless of how old your fax machine is! Too good! To make your life easy, we've split up each game so you can cut straight to the chase - you only pay for the help you need!



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(pcpowerplay@next.com.au), fax us (02 9310 1315) or write (FAX-ON-DEMAND, 78 Renwick St Redfern NSW 2016).

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- 100 Missions 1-4
- 101 Missions 5-10
- 102 Missions 11-17
- 103 Missions 18-20 plus tips & Survival tips

Half-Life

- 110 We've got hostiles
- 111 Power Up, On the Rails (Part 1)
- 112 On the Rails (Part 2), Apprehension, Residue Processing
- 113 Questionable ethics, Surface Tension (Part 1)
- 114 Surface Tension (Part 2), Forget about the Freeman, Lambda Core, Xen, Gonarh's Lair
- 115 Interloper, Nihilanth and weapon descriptions

Dune 2000

- 120 Atreides Missions 5-7
- 121 Atreides Missions 8-9, Harkonnen Mission 5
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Starcraft

- 130 General strategies, Protoss
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Forsaken

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Dark Reign

- 160 Freedom Guard 3-5
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Blade Runner

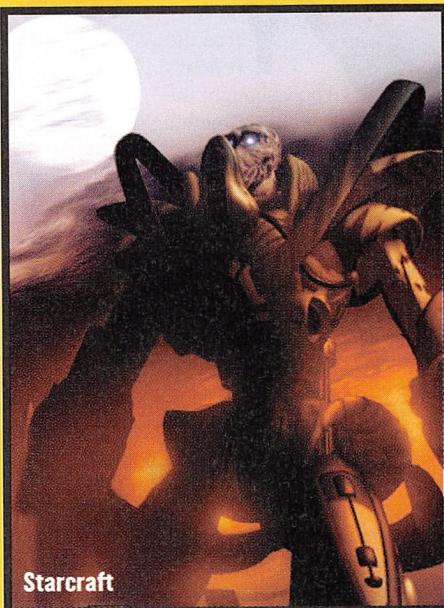
- 170 Act 1, Act 2 Tyrell Building, Police Station
- 171 Act 2 (from Animoid Row), Act 3
- 172 Act 4, Act 5

Curse of Monkey Island

- 180 Parts 1 & 2
- 181 Parts 3, 4, 5 & 6

The Last Express

- 190 All Q&A



Starcraft

How to use FAX-ON-DEMAND:

1. If your fax machine has a phone handset, pick it up and dial 1902 220 423. Follow the instructions given by the warm and friendly mystery voice. You will be asked to key-in the 3-digit code for the game/games you want faxed-back.
2. If your fax machine DOES NOT have a handset, ensure your phone is on the same line as the fax, or use the fax's SPEAKER function. Dial 1902 220 423 and follow the instructions. Press 'Start' on your fax when the voice asks you to do so.
3. Stand back and marvel, as moments later the game help you need rolls majestically forth from your fax machine.

Important: All calls are charged at \$2.50 per minute. Calls from mobile and pay phones may attract a higher rate. Make sure you have permission from the person who pays the phone bill if you're under 18! All charges will appear on your regular phone bill.

TECH SUPPORT. If weird stuff happens, or nothing at all, call 02 9212 4222 for help.

HERETIC II

PLAYGUIDE

So you think it's just 'Quake with spells on' eh? Heretic II asks all-new skills of you. Here's how you do it. By George Argy



You've read the review.

You've bought the game. But something's not quite right. No matter how hard you try, every time you challenge one of those trigger happy players on the net he turns you into a chicken and laughs as he does the KFC on you.

Once again, PC PowerPlay comes to the rescue with the Heretic II Playguide. In these few and yet surprisingly informative pages we bring to you all the knowledge you need to get a handle on this great third person action-adventure. All the weapons and spells are described so that you know which way to point the things, weaknesses in enemies are pointed out and if you are really stuck, the websites we point you to should satiate your thirst for all things Heretic.

Weapons, Spells and Items

Well, you didn't think Corvus' journey was a walk in the park, did you? This game is not about making friends and influencing people; it is about making other creatures hurt in interesting ways. Raven have done a good job of supplying us with a decent arsenal to indulge ourselves with...

WEAPONS

Durhnwood Staff

Don't let the fact that this is the default weapon in the game fool you - the staff can become one of the most powerful weapons in the game. In fact, it is quite possible to play

and complete the entire game with the staff alone, but then you miss out on all the wonderful eye candy. The staff is one of the only weapons in the game that requires no mana and at close range it is positively lethal. Use it to slice, dice and generally carve up your opponents (and it comes with a free set of steak knives). Find Blade Shrines scattered throughout the game as they increase the power level of your staff. You may also want to experiment with the many moves possible with the staff, such as the pole vault kick, and 360 degree spin attack - practice against the whipping bird, he likes it!



Hellstaff

A faithful carry-over from the original, the Hellstaff rapidly fires red balls that don't do a lot of damage but are relentless against a foe. The Hellstaff uses Hellorbs for ammo. The Hellstaff is best used against multiple, weak opponents so you can lay it on thick without them having the chance to close or flank you.

OFFENSIVE SPELLS

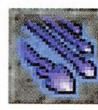
As well as weapons in Heretic II, Corvus is a skilled mage employing a wide variety of offensive and defensive spells to lay waste to his foes. The mana system has been simplified from the original so that offensive spells use Green Mana and defensive spells use Blue Mana. Offensive spells can be used at the same time as defensive spells for powerful combo attacks.



Fireball

If only this spell lived up to its

impressive name. The Fireball spell is the only spell Corvus knows at the beginning of the game. It is a ranged spell to supplement his melee weapon, but is pretty weak and only to be used when you cannot close on a foe for whatever reason. About the only good thing about the Fireball spell is that it can be used without mana, but does even less damage than before, meaning it is only useful against chickens.



Thunder Blast

The first spell you master is the Thunder Blast. This spell fires five purple balls that spread out as they travel towards your foe. It is an excellent spell to cast against multiple foes in front of you, or to unleash on a single enemy up close. If you can manage to get all five balls to hit, it will kill all but the strongest enemies in the game.



Firewall

A great spell in a pinch, Firewall casts a wall of fire (natch) around Corvus that will continue to burn foes after it has been cast, much like a good dousing of napalm. Use Firewall when you



HERETIC II



are surrounded by multiple foes.



Storm Bow

One of the two bows in the game, the Storm Bow fires Storm Arrows which create a red storm on impact that rains acid at the point of impact. Great for firing into a doorway or narrow space and watching as your enemies get melted down.



Phoenix Bow

Pretty much the same as the Phoenix Rod in the original game, the Phoenix Bow fires Phoenix arrows that are essentially medieval rockets. I'm sure we've all played Quake, so an education in how to use a rocket projectile weapon will not be necessary today.



Sphere of Annihilation

Him lob little ball. Little ball turn into big, blue explosion. Big, blue cause much pain. Longer him hold fire button down, greater pain.



Iron Doom

This is the spell you use when you mean business. When you're sick of taking aim, wearing down foes, avoiding their fire, going tit for tat - just lob some Iron Doom their way and watch the fun begin. The spiked ball you throw explodes, firing off shards in all directions, causing a lot of damage. It also sucks on the mana, so make sure a Mana Shrine is handy.

DEFENSIVE SPELLS

Ring of Repulsion



The Ring of Repulsion emits a ring of blue energy outwards from Corvus that repels any foes around him - good when you're surrounded.

Meteor Storm



The Meteor Storm spell conjures up four green meteors that orbit around Corvus and will launch at the nearest attacking foe. This is one of the best defensive spells, as you can leave the meteors to circle you and take care of business while you concentrate on walking and chewing gum at the same time. The little balls disappear if not used after a little while though, so you may need to cast this one every so often.

Lightning Shield



Similar to the Meteor Swarm, but your foes are struck by lightning when they approach you. Foes need to be closer to you than the Meteor Storm though, as Lighting Shield does not hunt foes down. It does a little more damage than the Meteor Storm, so it is good towards the end of the game when the baddies are tougher.

Morph Ovum



Back from Heretic is the Morph Ovum, a spell which fires an ovum in eight directions around Corvus and turns your enemies into chickens, naturally. In deathmatch there is a random possibility that your foe will be turned into the Super Chicken, which has 999 health and does 999 damage with each peck.

Teleport



Teleport also makes a return from Heretic, once again whizzing you off to a safe place if you're about to die. It can also whizz you five seconds back in time if you've just used a bad pickup line in a pub, which can come in handy.



Tome of Power



The Tome of Power, although not a defensive spell as such, increases the power of your weapons. Most weapons have a different effect after they have been given the tome treatment, so experiment first before using that Phoenix Bow in a small room.

SHRINES

Just like in Diablo, shrines reward you with cool presents if you've been a good elf. Unlike Diablo, there are no bad shrines.

Blade Shrine: The Blade Shrine increases the power of Corvus' staff. The effect is cumulative and lasts the whole game.

Spirit Shrine: Heals your wounds.

Mana Shrine: Totally replenishes Blue and Green Mana.

Ghost Shrine: Makes you invisible.

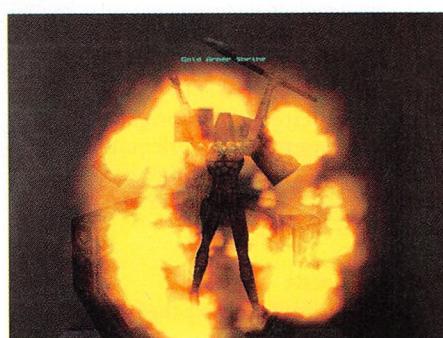
Power Shrine: Same as the Tome of the same name, but in tastier Shrine flavour.

Reflective Shrine: Makes Corvus immune to projectiles for a while.

Armour Shrine: Gives Corvus either silver or gold armour.

Light of the Seraph Shrine: Makes Corvus glow with an unearthly light. Good for parties.

Lungs of the Ssithra Shrine: Almost doubles Corvus' underwater lung capacity.



HERETIC II

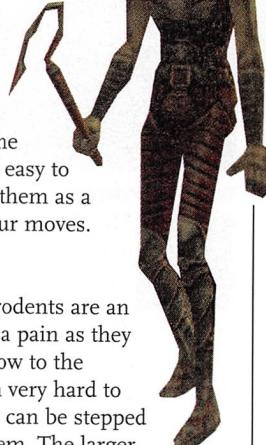
ENEMIES

The bad guys in Heretic II present quite a challenge, with each creature being unique in terms of strengths and weaknesses as well as modes of attack. There is no one easy way to kill every enemy and you'll find that if you employ different strategies against different foes you'll progress through the game much quicker. Of course, you could just read the helpful advice below and save yourself all that time experimenting and actually get out there and kick some.



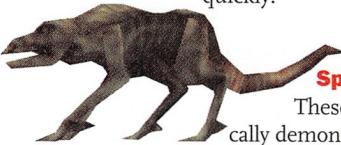
Plagued Sidhe

Your former kin-dred who are now insane murderers thanks to the plague. You'll find them in the city and they're quite easy to kill. Use the staff on them as a chance to practice your moves.



Rat

You might think rodents are an easy kill, but rats are a pain as they are small and crawl low to the ground making them very hard to hit. The smaller ones can be stepped on if you run over them. The larger ones will need a good slashing or burning. Be careful to back away from a pack of them as they can wear you down quite quickly.



Plague Spreader

These guys are basically demons that hurl their plague-ridden mucus at you. Keep at a distance if possible and use projectile weapons. If you must close, use combo attacks with the staff as they won't go down with one normal slash.

Plagued Ssithra

These amphibious creatures shoot fire arrows at you, so your best bet is to shoot something back.



K'chekrik

Large, roach-like beings that can use magic, the K'chekrik can take you down easily, especially since they almost always travel in groups. They are not exceptionally bright though, so Storm Bows work quite well against these guys as they can't seem to quite work out where that acid rain is coming from.

Seraph Guards

These guys are probably the



toughest enemies in the game. They will take multiple hits from any of your weapons before being brought to the ground, and if they get up close and personal they will beat you senseless with either a whip or an axe. Keep these guys at a distance if you can and use powerful projectile weapons like the Phoenix Bow.

Caurthorians

The Caurthorians are Assassin-like creatures that can teleport themselves around you and throw knives at your back. Try to keep them up front and if one disappears, chances are it's behind you. Use powerful projectile weapons and a defensive spell like Meteor Storm to dispense with these guys quickly.



G'Krokon

Large, spitting insects. Can be killed by common insect repellent, or a decent offensive projectile weapon.

Harpy

A really unpleasant creature to deal with. Harpies travel in flocks, swoop down at you and try and remove your head; often successfully. Don't bother trying to tackle them offensively - you'll waste time, health and mana. Use Meteor Storm and



swipe at them with your staff if they get too close.

Myxini

Big, ugly fish. They swim in water - fast, too. You can almost always see them in the water when you're on the shore, so try and take them out before you take a dive.

Gorgon

Not the great Greek mythological beast fortunately, Gorgons are small dinosaurs that look better placed in Turok. They are well camouflaged and hunt in packs so they often surprise and surround you. If this does happen, use Firewall or Lightning shield to keep the pack at a distance and concentrate on taking them out one at a time with your staff.

HERETIC II

TIPS'n'TACTICS

I feel like Chicken Tonight(c)!

The chicken returns from the original Hexen. If you are turned into a chicken in deathmatch, you only have one hit-point and only do one hitpoint of damage when you peck an opponent. Needless to say, being a chicken is not a good position to be in when everyone else is wielding staves and spells. The best way to avoid being killed whilst feathered is to run, jump and zig-zag at the same time. Chickens are small, fast and can fly a little, so this should help you to evade all but the area of effect spells.



starters, it doesn't use any mana so you can wield it willy and even nilly. You know that cool pole vault you do across ledges by running and then jumping? Well, it does a hurt-load of damage if you hit an enemy. Also, if you can time that right so that you give someone a boot to the head, it's an Instant Kill. The staff will also decapitate opponents in deathmatch if you swipe them in the head. Without a head they're deader than Kenneth Starr in a young democrat frat party.

It's just a flesh wound

Having your arm sliced off can ruin your whole day. Fortunately, help is at hand (yukka, yukka). Make your way to the nearest health (Spirit) Shrine for a health boost and make like a squid and regenerate that limb. This only works if you lose a limb, not your head because if you lose your head you can't talk, so you obviously can't ask for directions to the nearest Spirit Shrine.

Hey baby, wanna serve the presidential staff?

Forget any other 3D shooter you've played; the staff in Heretic II can be the most powerful weapon in the game if used effectively. For



Damn Mozzies
Those glorified mosquitoes are a real pain in the rear. Don't waste your time using offensive spells as they can dodge well and will chew your mana before you know it. In this case, defense is your best offence - cast the



Meteor Barrier spell when you see these suckers flying around and your little green balls of hurt will do the rest.

CHEATS

Just like in any Quake-engine game, cheats can be activated by bringing down the console (press the ` key) and typing the command. Press the ` key again to resume play.

angermonsters monsters attack you immediately
crazymonsters monsters attack anything on sight
freezemonsters Toggle freezing of monsters
kiwi Toggle no clipping (walk through walls) mode
meatwagon Kill all non-boss level monsters
playbetter Toggle god mode
spawn <item> spawn an item in front of you. Some helpful items are:
item_weapon_firewall
item_weapon_maceballs
item_weapon_magimissile

HERETIC II

item_weapon_phoenixbow
 item_defense_meteorbarrier
 item_defense_polymorph
 item_defense_powerup
 item_defense_shield
 item_defense_teleport
 item_health_full
 item_mana_combo_half
 item_puzzle_canyonkey

ONLINE RESOURCES

There's a whole heap of Heretic II info on the net, the likes of which hasn't been seen from a Raven game before. Heretic II multiplays easily and is fast over the net, too. These web sites will get you started if you want to locate servers, grab new maps or have a bit of a hack and slash at the code, rather than your foes.

<http://www4.activision.com/games/hereticii/>

- The official website. Being official means you won't find any add-ons or levels here, just some marketing hype.



<http://www.ravensoft.com/>

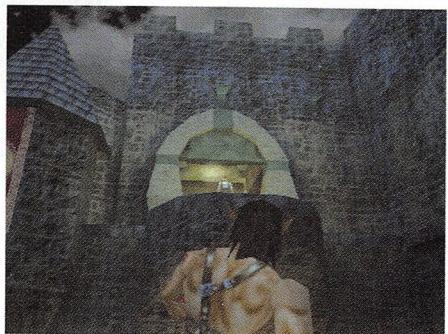
- Check out what the developers are up to.
<http://www.heretic2.com/>
 - A decent news site. It's missing a lot of information, but the news is fairly current.

<http://welcome.to/H2Annihilation>

- Don't ask me what the deal is with this URL, just accept it. A bit of a dry site, but you may find some files you wouldn't find on other sites.
<http://www.hexenworld.com/tominator/>
 - A well designed and very informative site, if a little slow in the update department.

<http://www.hereticii.com/>

- Very well designed, current and informative site. Bookmark this one if you're a Heretic nut.
<http://www.hereticii.com/overlord/index1.html>

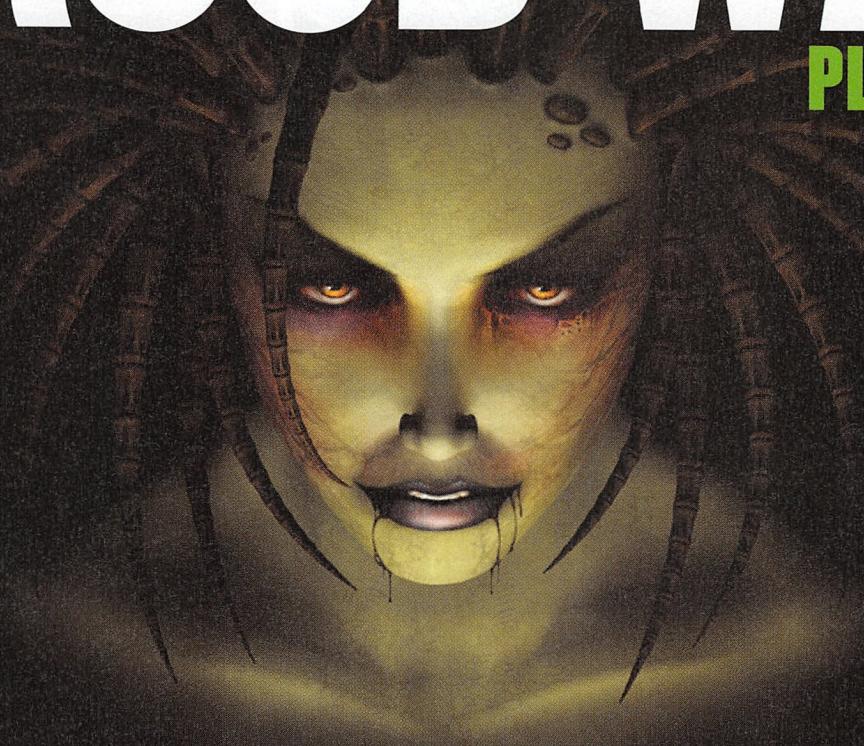


- A useful site for the real techies, containing a full list of command line parameters and other stuff.



STARCRAFT BROOD WAR

PLAYGUIDE



Damn tough game this. Don't be a hero, Billy, let us help.
By Rod 'Spoonman' Campbell

Brood War is a Starcraft Expansion pack, and a very good one at that. Like Starcraft, Brood War has three very different races - so different are they, that you could be forgiven for thinking they were from three different games. Therefore logically enough, this playguide is divided into three sections, Terran, Zerg and Protoss.

THE TERRANS

Terran Units:

The new Terran forces are fairly standard fare, but both new units are quite useful, obviously the Medic is a support unit, but the Valkyrie is quite destructive, especially in groups.

Medic:

Medics in Brood War are actually very useful, their primary function is of course to heal your troops, but they'll do this automatically when placed in a group, which is a great bonus. You can leave a couple of groups of ten or so Marines with one or two Medics and simply forget about them until you need them

again, because unless they come under heavy fire, they're going to survive much longer with the Medics in the group.

Although Healing is its main function, the Medic also has two other very useful abilities. Restoration gives the Medic the ability to remove almost any condition affecting a unit. This includes Plague, Lockdown and Irradiate. Obviously this is of great value when a group of Defilers decides to neutralise your Battle

Cruisers, or anything else for that matter. Restoration is a fantastic bonus and you should work your way to researching it as soon as possible.

The other special ability is that of Optic Flare, once a unit is subjected to this it is permanently blinded to only see one square away. This is obviously fantastic against detector units, rendering them useless for the rest of their lives.



TERRAN MEDIC

Armour: Light
Hit Points: 60
Ground Attack: 0
Air Attack: 0
Attack range: 0
Gas required: 25
Minerals required: 50

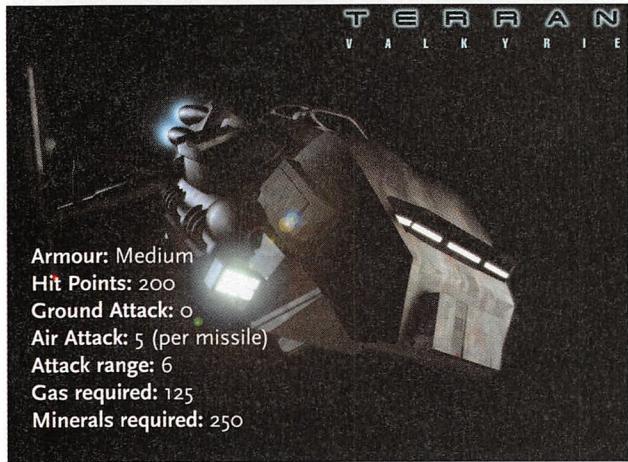


BROODWAR

Valkyrie Frigate:

 The Valkyrie is a very useful unit and is great to use as a support aircraft for bigger ships as well as an all out offensive force in its own right. It will most likely be compared with the Zerg Devourer which is a similar unit and both are aiming to control the skies. It's an interesting battle.

Valkyries work best against groups of slow moving units. They fire eight missiles simultaneously and each one has some splash damage. This is great because it means that you're hitting the target, as well as units around it. If you have four or five Valkyries together they form a menacing attacking force. The Valkyrie works fantastically well when grouped with two or three Battle Cruisers. The Valkyries can stave off air resistance while the Battle Cruisers can concentrate on the ground forces. They work



equally well with a Science Vessel, which of course has no defence against enemy aircraft.

TERRAN STRATEGIES

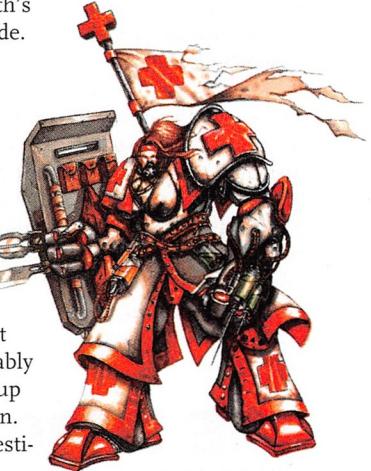
The Terran force is the most 'normal' force involved, meaning it will be more accessible to new Starcraft players since many of the Terran strategies work well in other games. This aside though, there are a lot of new tactics available with the addition of new units



and the Goliath's Missile upgrade.

General:

Firstly, them Medics are great, but putting more than two in a group of twelve reduces



firepower a lot and will probably mean the group will be overrun. Never underestimate the Medic's Optic Flare, it can render very powerful units useless. The Goliath's new upgraded Missiles make them fantastic moving missile turrets, meaning that if you want to move your city (never underestimate this tactic) you have much better ground to air support.

There are plenty of underhanded tactics you can use if you're feeling nasty. The first of which is to bunker hop, building bunkers closer and closer to the enemy, filling them with Marines as you go. This is great against the pesky Zerg. Otherwise you can always fly a factory behind your enemy's base and take them from behind while they aren't watching. Mean yes, but it can win games.

Against the Zerg:

Because the Zerg are mainly organic they are quite prone to large groups of Firebats. If resources are tight this is a great way to win a battle without spending a lot on expensive Battle Cruisers. Speaking of Battle Cruisers, Scourges are quite

BROODWAR

good at taking them down and are only half the price.

Always protect your Command Centres because if they become infested you're definitely out of luck. The best way to protect them is with Battle Cruisers and Wraiths from the air, and a couple of Marine laden bunkers guarding the perimeter. If you happen to have some parasite infected units send them off to battle alone right away. They will die, but the enemy can no longer see what's going on through that unit. If you send them in a large group the enemy will have plenty of time to prepare for the onslaught.

Against the Protoss:

In this instance Firebats are only really good at getting rid of Zealots so don't build too many, but keep a few around your base for Zealot attacks early in the game. Also use Ghosts for defence, their lockdown ability is very handy when the odd carrier comes by and wreaks havoc and they aren't particularly cost effective to use in sustained attack.

A key to getting rid of the Protoss is actually seeing them, take down Arbiters as soon as you can to reveal the rest of them. Use Yamato Cannons in tandem with the science vessel's EMP ability to rid the world of their existence. Goliaths are now more effective as air defence and should be used in tandem with missile turrets to surround your base, both to be used as an early warning system and to make flying your skies an unfriendly experience.

THE ZERG

Zerg Units:

The new Zerg units are somewhat less standard than the Terrans. Although the Devourer is very similar to the Valkyrie, the Lurker is something completely different all together.

Lurker:



The defensive qualities of the Lurker are second to none. Like many of the Zerg, the Lurker can burrow, but unlike the rest of them the Lurker can do so whether burrowing has been researched or not. Once they are burrowed they wait until enemy units wander by and fire spikes through the ground to where the enemy is standing. Lurkers can kill units fairly quickly if they're dumb enough to stand around and a pair of them in front of your base is quite a deterrent for would be spies.

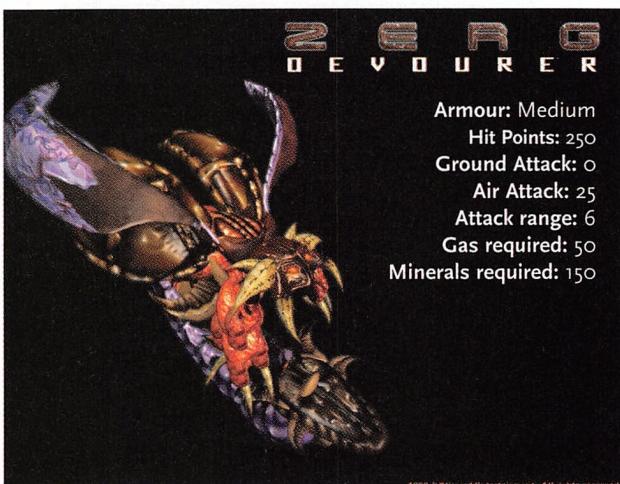
Lurkers do have some drawbacks, as you'd expect. They can be found by detector units, which makes them especially vulnerable to air attacks. As well as this, they have

no attacking abilities while walking around, so if you want to place them a long way from your base you're going to have to escort them to their position whilst trying to remain undetected.

Lurkers in groups are quite formidable, and are quite good for base defense against flesh creatures. A ring of Lurkers around your



BROODWAR



base act as a sort of mobile razor wire which can make life hell for intruding foot soldiers and other non robotic creatures.

Devourer

While on the surface this unit looks to behave almost identically to the Valkyrie, there are several subtle, but very important



differences. Firstly, the Devourer only fires single Acid spores rather than salvos of missiles. The concentrated power of the Spore is considerably less than all the missiles combined, but the Devourer makes up for this with more Hit Points to play with. The Devourers Spores also contribute splash damage to nearby units and with each hit the unit affected is more vulnerable to the next shot and also takes longer to return fire, making the Devourer a crippling force in the air.

Comparing the two, battles between similar numbers of Devourers and Valkyries tend to come out about even. Valkyries usually get the upper hand early, and the Devourers fight back with their debilitating weapons. If the Valkyrie have some other support craft or are larger in number they will usually take out the enemy threat.

Devourers are evolved from Mutalisks and cost slightly less than Valkyries overall, meaning you should be able to put more in the sky.

Zerg Strategies:

The Zerg are quite a low-tech race, but make up for that with supremely cheap units. You can have hordes of quite good units which can definitely go toe to toe with the big boys of the other races. For this reason alone Zerg strategies must be quite different because they will always lose a technology race.

General:

Preparation is the key for the Zerg, initially you're going to need quite a lot of Zerglings and Hydralisks to ward off any spies and early attacks because as you know they are really no match one on one with any of the other early units. If you send Zerglings to attack, forget the units and go for the structures, they are much more effective against them. Guardians are your main attack force, and a group of twelve is definitely not to be sneezed at, and backed up with Devourers they make a great combination against all opposition.

Defensively, keep quite a few Scourges around your base in case of Battle Cruisers or Carriers. Place sunken or Spore Colonies around your base and put a ring of Lurkers in front of them. Any enemy who actually makes it into your base will be severely weakened. Lastly, remember that the more hatcheries you have, the more larvae you can convert, and thus more firepower you can deliver at the enemy in a short space of time.

Against the Terrans:

We don't recommend grunt rushes, but if you want to be nasty build about 36 Zerglings and upgrade their speed and attack and send

BROODWAR

them off to the Terran base, you just better hope there aren't too many Firebats around. Otherwise, build lots of Hydralisks, they are good against air and ground units and are a pretty good all purpose unit. To use your Queen effectively against the Terrans use Spawn Broodling on Tanks and Goliaths and Ensnare on cloaked Wraiths and Ghosts. Once you have them, use Parasite on them and they shall never cloak again.

The Terran force can't survive without supplies and if you cast Plague on a group of supply depots they will soon have some major problems. This tactic works much better against human players, because they may be so busy fighting someone else, or simply not concentrating hard enough to notice their supplies disappearing right from under their noses.

Against the Protoss:

Early in the game you can't beat Hydralisks for cost effectiveness against the Protoss. Build as many as you can in the initial stages and you're well on the way to a victory. Once you develop an attack force take out the Pylons first. Once you do that all the other structures around them become large paperweights and not much else. Beware of probes though which will try to warp in new Pylons (if you let them).

Defensively, overkill is the best word for it. You can never have enough Colonies or Scourges hanging around your base. Devourers are also quite good because the spores they fire make it harder for the enemy to shoot back, this obviously isn't as effective against carriers though because they don't actually do the fighting. Lone Colonies are annihilated by Zealots or anything else, so back them up with a few Hydralisks if you haven't got any plans to build a few more in the area. Arbiters are a problem, but your Queen's Ensnare will fix it.

THE PROTOSS

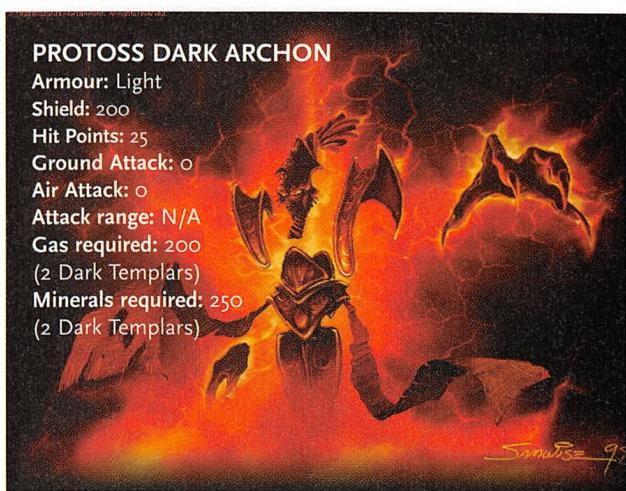
Protoss Units:

The Protoss get three new units in Brood War, even though Dark Templars were found in the original Starcraft you could never build them. The Dark Archon is a super Unit made from Dark Templars and the Corsair is an air unit with a twist, read on.

Dark Templar:

 While it is quite expensive as far as ground forces go the Dark Templar is definitely not over rated. While they have a fairly large supply of hit points its their attack which makes them devastating, as well as the fact that they're permanently cloaked.

Dark Templars are fantastic for spy missions, sneaking into enemy bases is a snap, and you can then go on a killing spree at very short notice. With the absence of detector units near your base you can build up a massive ground force virtually undetected, unleashing your power on them when they least expect



BROODWAR



it. A Dark Templar working alone will quickly finish off any lone troops positioned for early warning quickly becoming invisible again to all but detectors. When taking on the Protoss it's always wise to have a detector unit in every sortie you send out. Otherwise you might wonder why your troops didn't come back.



On the other hand, if you're playing the Protoss try to build Templar Archives as soon as possible. If the opposition hasn't developed detector units, they're pretty much at your mercy.

Aside from being an excellent unit by itself, two Dark Templars can merge to form a new kind of devastating Archon.

Dark Archon:

The Dark Archon is of absolutely no use at all in melee combat, but is totally invaluable helping out the units that are. The Dark Archon has a mind control ability which allows you to make an enemy unit your own, obviously this is not an ability to sneeze at. While this is in operation it drains energy and shields making the Dark Archon more vulnerable to attacks. It's definitely worthwhile though, because if you take an enemy transport you get all the units inside as well. So great is this ability's value that one or two Dark Archons can mean the difference in a large battle, or even the game.

The other ability is Maelstrom which affects biological units and acts like an area effect lockdown, any units caught in that area will be very vulnerable (time for a Psionic storm me thinks). Don't be afraid to have your Dark Archons in the front lines, their massive shield will keep them healthy until you need them, and they could just make the difference.

Corsair:

Straight from the start, while the Corsair is an air to air fighter, it will get eaten for breakfast if you take it into battle with any of the other air to air specialists from the game. Unfortunately, no-one told the Corsairs this and they'll run off to fight in any opportunity, and most probably lose. The Corsair's best feature is in dealing with ground forces.

The Corsair casts a Disruption web below it so it cannot be harmed from below and neither can the air units around it meaning your Scouts can deliver their payload in relative peace. While this is undoubtedly a bonus, if they come up against any air forces their resistance is only minimal. Forget it in Melee situations and use it for Air to ground backup only.

Protoss Strategies:

Being the most highly evolved, the Protoss have the best units, but they also come at a cost so winning a war isn't simply a matter of producing as many units as you can and sending them off to the enemy base to win. When resources are tight, an attitude like this will surely mean defeat.

BROODWAR



General Strategies:

To survive the Protoss need resources so you had better get multiple Vespene Geysers under your belt before you can seriously think about mounting a challenge. The gas is more important to the Protoss than the minerals, and if you run out you can say goodnight. Probes needn't just wait around to build things when only one will do. Use the warp rift to maximise the number of probes collecting Gas and Minerals, this helps build your forces early in the game.

When building Photon Cannons group them together and service them with more than one Pylon. They are quite an effective weapon but are expensive and fairly easy to pick off when they are alone.

Arbiters are very handy for surprise attacks, especially



BROODWAR



combined with hallucination. The enemy will be surprised and seemingly be faced with many more units than there really are. Get the Arbiter to follow a unit so it doesn't actually get into the thick of the battle.

There are several underhanded tactics you can use. Put an Observer near each unowned mineral field and take out any new bases built near them before they can get established. A personal favourite is putting a couple of Templars near an enemy mineral field and start launching a few Psionic Storms and the streams of workers. Perhaps even nastier is to place an Arbiter behind the enemy and use Recall to bring in a few Archons. End of story.

Against the Terrans:

Use carriers with Corsairs and an observer to totally destroy a Terran Base. Use the Corsairs to cast a web above missile turrets and let the Interceptors go wild. The Observer is to spot any Wraiths lying about. In multiplay, guard against Firebat rushes by making a combination of Zealots, Dragoons and Photon Cannons, and Zealots usually go down when they're the only forces. Even so, Zealots are great against Goliaths after their speed upgrade.

Mind Controlling Dark Archons can win a battle alone if used properly. Taking control of Battle Cruisers is always a great idea to send the Terrans packing, especially if they're Yamato cannon upgraded. The Science Vessel's EMP is highly annoying but can be minimised by spreading your units out. Better still, give it a welcoming committee.

Against the Zerg:

Secrecy is the best possible thing and you should keep Overlords away at all costs, Photon Cannons aren't the best for this because they'll just fly out of range, a couple of Dragoons are a much better bet. Photon Cannons are a good weapon but can be over run in a Zergling rush and destroyed quickly, which is quite an expensive blunder so have a few troops nearby for backup when needed.

Parasites are bad, but infested units can be quite useful to use as a decoy. Send it and a few other units off to a Zerg outpost and hopefully the Zerg player may feel this is a major attack, pooling its defence in that area. While this is going on

send your main force to their now under defended base and take full toll on their stupidity. Never leave an infested unit in your base.

Using carriers against the Zerg is not always a good idea since Scourges can take them out in relative ease and are much cheaper. Instead, Reavers are great for attacking bases, especially small ones, their Scarabs will mop up a base in no time. When attacking by air, use Corsairs to block Spore Colonies to create a gap in their defence matrix so you can get into the meat of the base relatively unhurt.



ORACLE

The Oracle, eh? What can you say about such a man? Well, not a lot, really...nothing that's printable anyway

Stuck with nowhere to turn? Stop wandering the wastelands in despair, the Oracle has all the answers. Send in your letters and you will find salvation somewhere, sometime.



Write to the Oracle at:

ORACLE
PC POWERPLAY
78 RENWICK ST
REDFERN
NSW 2016
ORACLE@PCPOWERPLAY.NEXT.COM.AU

Grim Fandango

After getting this great game for Christmas, it didn't take long to get out of town and recover Glottis' heart from the giant spiders in the forest. I took a look around after that and saw that big tree with the pumps that Glottis says we have to knock down, after ten years of giving Glottis "a minute to balance these doggies," I realised that, that was probably not the way to go. Any help? Also what's the deal with that crazy sign near where heart-less Glottis was lying?

**James Lindstrom,
Executor of the D.O.D.**

Sounds like you're stuck in the main area of the forest, near where Glottis was crying. Well if you wanna get out of forest you need to pick up the crazy sign with the arrows on it and enter the maze. Put the sign down anywhere and it will turn and point to a passage. Unfortunately, going

through that passage doesn't seem to work. Pick up the sign again and take it somewhere else. It should point in a new direction. Keep moving the sign until you pinpoint where it is attracted to - it's not pointing to a passage, but a point in the clearing. Put the sign down at this point, and a passage will open.

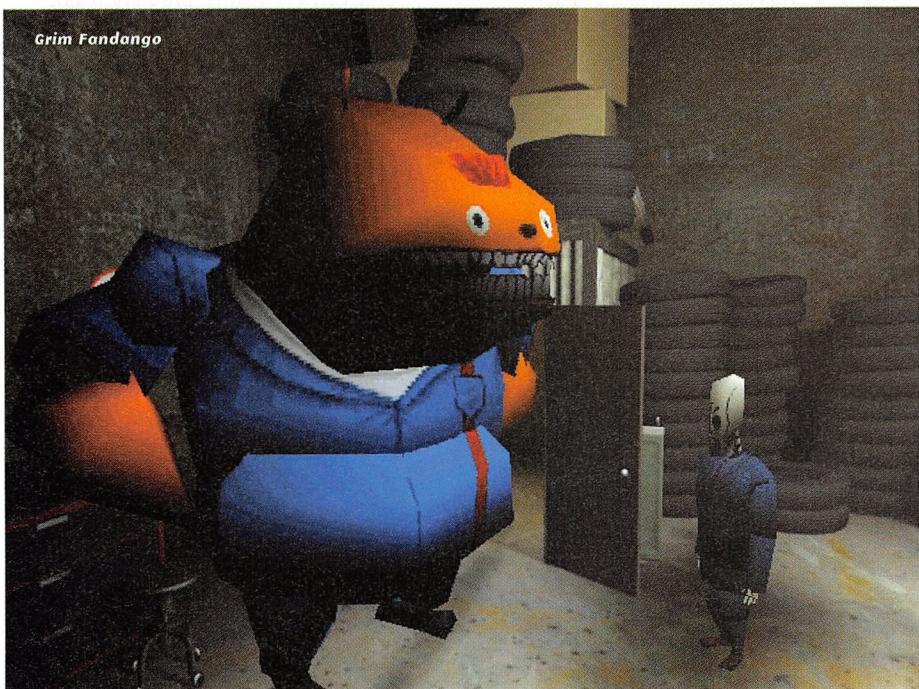
Tomb Raider 3

I'm stuck in Tomb Raider 3, how do I get past the water tanks in the Water Control room? I don't like drowning but I know I have to access the button. What's the trick, o' wise one?

**Hans Gorvic
Auckland**

There are two tanks in this room; one is full and the other is empty. Flip the switch to flood the empty tank then jump in and swim down to get some items and flip a second switch that opens a door in the full tank. Return topside and flip the switch again to lower the water level in the tank with the door you just opened. Dive in and swim past the dangerous blades which should slow down as you get near allowing you to pass. Continue along the passage past the fans and look for a crawlspace when the main hall comes to a dead end. Drop down to the passage below and enter the darkroom. Pull the mesh box out then push it along the walkway so the generator smashes the wall panel. After you have shorted out the appropriate systems, the glass panel back in the Water Control Room will have lifted and you can access the button.

Grim Fandango



Police Quest: SWAT 2

I'm in the middle of an explosive situation. On mission 8 of PQ: SWAT 2 I need to collect all the evidence, free the hostages and arrest all the suspects involved with planting explosives throughout the quarry. Trouble is, I get blown up before I even get close enough to talk to the suspects. Can you shed some light on what I need to do?

**David Francis
Internet**

You need to set up a sniper team to take out any hostile suspects. Locate the explosives expert first off so that he doesn't start detonating explosives. When he is in custody, disarm any explosives found using a qualified bomb expert and arrest any other suspects. K-9s are exceptionally good for this mission because they sniff out the explosives for you, making it much easier. If a suspect has a hostage use your best judgement on the course of action, but naturally a bullet to the head is my favourite plan of attack. Rescue the hostages and return them to the SWAT Bus. When all terrorists have been arrested and hostages and bystanders rescued you can call yourself a hero.

Quake 2

I'm playing Quake 2, and I am stuck. I'm at a point where the computer says ACCESS BRIDGE LOWERED, FIND SERVICE ELEVATOR TO FACTORY and I can not find it anywhere, there is one elevator which is like a floor around a room with 3 levels, but I can not find anything else. Any help would be great!!!!

**Tom Byron
Internet**

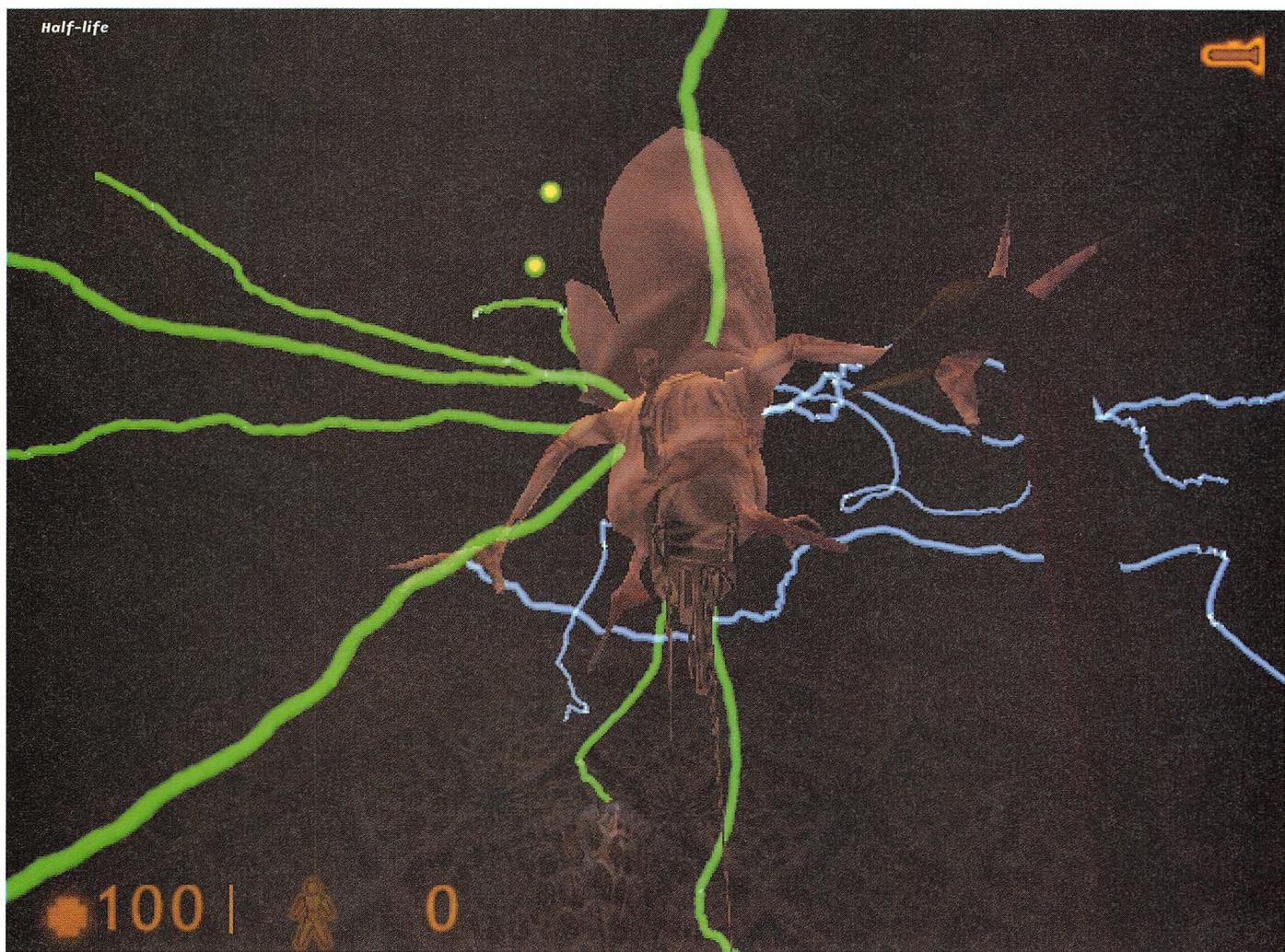
Go down to the lowest level on the 3, then go through the door and continue until you find a giant claw. Activate the claw and jump down. If all goes well you'll find the elevator.

Baldur's Gate

Can you tell me what is required to move to chapter 4. I have a feeling that I have to find the Bandit's camp but don't seem to be able to find it. I have explored almost all of the areas south of Baldur's Gate.

**Kurt White
Internet**

In Beregost, go find Tranzig in the Feldpost Inn. Make him tell you the location of the Bandit camp after bouncing him around the room first. If you are a wimpy warrior make sure you save prior to going into the inn. He is upstairs in one of the rooms. After he reveals the location,



you should kill him for his crimes and get his scrolls and stuff.

Thief

? I'm playing on the expert level (perhaps I was a bit stupid) and one of my objectives is to find a silver fire poker. I've got everything else and Ramirez is having a nice sleep in the basement. Can you tell me where it is so I can give it to Ramirez where the sun don't shine, please?

David Norwood

Internet

? Remember, the extremely nice and large bedroom, with two tapestries of the Hammers, complete with Balcony?. Well just like any fine hotel hack them away, and one of them has an opening. Go through it and explore, and keep your eyes open, and you'll find what you're looking for.. Alternatively just look inside the fireplace and push the button.

Half-Life

? I have played Half-Life with most problems being remedied by chance I suppose but I am severely stuck and am starting to be frustrated. I am at the stage where a massive floating thing closes its hands and either kills me with white star shots or releases a green teleport star. I have teleported out of the cave but only end up full circle after I have finished killing all in the other room with the water filled holes in the floor and

the animal trampling around on the surface. Please help before I lose faith.

Lucky Luke

Perth

? Here, it's simple. You can't kill the Big Brain Alien straight off, you see. First you have to shoot the crystals around on the walls. They'll take a bit of punishment, but eventually you'll get there. Then you can hurt the BigBadGuy - which is a big enough ask in itself.

Sin

? I am stuck in the bit underground after the bank. How do I stop the bomb from blowing up?

Frank Bindrich

Stanmore

? You can't. Instead you need to find a loose brick in the wall, (it's to the right when you enter the room), and then activate/push the brick. You can now escape through the hole.

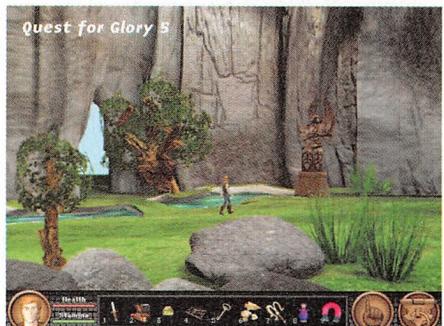
Quest For Glory 5

? QFG5 is a great game but I'm stuck in Hades. I have just talked to that lord of death where you can free Erana or Katrina, and I have got a container of the water but what now? I'm a wizard and have been trying to go back but I can't levitate back up the ledge, is there a certain place you are supposed to be or a bug or what - help me please!

Sophie Simons

Helburg

? Things work kind of strange. First, make sure you've got water from both the calm area and the whirlpool. Then walk left until you exit the area. On the dragon's skeleton screen, go all the way right and exit there. You should come out at the door to the left of the entrance to Hades. That's what worked for me anyway.



TIPS & TACTICS

It's, like, ethical cheating

FALLOUT 2

★ Steal a lot. Some items such as the Bozar for example are very rare, especially when trying to purchase from a shop. You can however get 3 of them by stealing from the green armoured guards outside NCR. Other items such as ammo and stim-packs are too expensive and more efficient to steal.

★ When you form a party be sure to give them ranged weapons. Party members are very efficient when it comes to enemies behind you.

★ Mixed encounters are often great. If you encounter something like "a patrol fighting highwaymen" just sit in the corner and don't shoot anyone. Let the two sides kill each other, then just move in and loot the bodies of the dead. If you have an aggressive party member like Sulik, however, you might want to ignore these encounters because he will just run in and attack indiscriminately.

★ When you get a new gun, don't just look at the gun's damage but examine the ammo. Ammo almost always has its own AP, DR and final damage modifiers. These effects can ultimately make a weapon much better than another.

FIFA 99

★ To win in World Class mode it's necessary to master the advanced Skill modes available on buttons 7 and 8 of the controller, particularly the Flick-Over and Step-over Nutmeg. Of course, it almost goes without saying that an eight-button gamepad is a necessity with Fifa 99.

★ To increase your chances of scoring, keep the ball in the offensive zone (the other teams half) as long as possible.



TUROK 2

★ Make sure you complete all your mission objectives before exiting a level. If you attempt to enter a portal before completing these objectives, you'll be transported all the way back to the beginning of the level.

★ If you come to a dead end, look around for a barrel. Generally, destroying it will open up a new pathway.

★ In certain spots throughout each level (for example, the Soul Rooms or the lairs of the Infernal Sisters), shotgun and handgun ammo will continuously respawn. Calculate the shortest possible route to these areas to ensure you don't get caught low on ammo.

★ Go for head shots. In general or if you're running low on ammo, be sure that the crosshair is aimed squarely on the head of your would-be victim to ensure a quick kill.

★ The War Claw is one of the most useful weapons in your arsenal. It's extremely adept at beheading mid-sized enemies and at taking care of smaller enemies such as baby Raptors.

NEED FOR SPEED 3

Shortcuts

★ Hometown - When approaching the first covered bridge soon after the start, there is an alternative route to the left that goes beside the bridge and the fence.

Just after the rock EA sign the road will split into two, rejoins, then splits into two again. On the second split, stay in the right lane and take the path to the right made of wood.

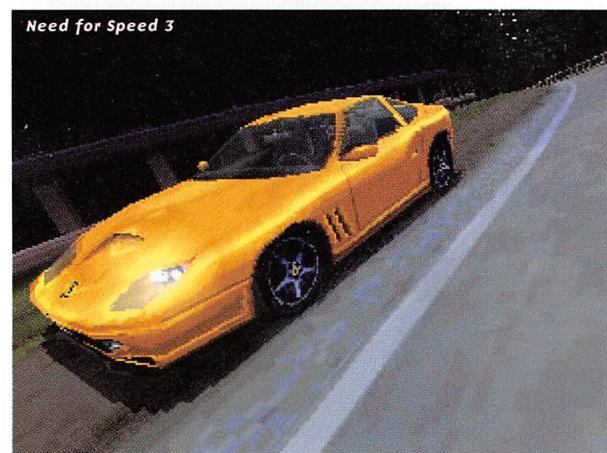
Redrock Ridge - When approaching the hairpin with the high rock in the middle, go through the gap between the rock and the wall.

Country Woods - Just before the long hairpin turn, there is a forest of trees to the right. There's a small fence enclosing the trees that's open. Go through it and you will come out the other side of the hairpin.

Lost Canyon - When approaching the temple ruins drive up the stairs and jump off them. Just make sure to aim away from the pillars.

Aquatica - Look for a road that curves to the left with a fence to the left and a giant wall to the right. As the curve begins to straighten out take the path to the right.

Empire City - Just before entering the first turn, there is a small gap to your left. Go through it. Another shortcut is near the end of the lap. As the pillars finish, look for a wall on the right made of wood with graffiti on it. Drive through it and power through.



CODE

Things you do when you're not good enough

3D Ultra Minigolf

Haunted House Hole: To get a hole in one, hit the ball from the tee to the light grave on the left side of the house. If you do this correctly the ball will come out the back of the house. This only works on the first shot.

Abominable Snowman Hole: Putt into the middle tunnel for a hole in one.

Moon Base Hole: Hit your ball into the metro station when the sign says 3. If you don't time it correctly, the ball will fall into the construction pit.

Jungle Hole: Across from the pyramid with the hole there is a pool of water. Putt your ball at the bird next to the water. The bird will pick up the ball and drop it in the cup.

Age of Empires: Rise of Rome

Just type in these codes in the chat window:

king arthur - changes birds into dragons (999 HP)

grantlinkspence - Turns animals into Animal Kings.

pow big mamma - new unit: BabyPrez (Baby on trike) (500 HP, 50 str, 10 arm, 15 rng)

convert this! - new priest unit ("Saint Francis"), who kills his enemies by lightning (25 HP, 200 str, 0 arm, 10 rng)

stormbilly - get a sci-fi robot ("Zug 209") (100 HP, 20 str, 10 arm, 15 rng)

photon man - gives a space age man with suits and laser rifles.

COMMANDOS: Beyond the Call of Duty

In the ENGLISH VERSION, type "**GONZO1982**" during the Game.

Now you have following Options:

SHIFT+V - Invisible to Enemy

SHIFT+X - Tele-transport

CTRL+I - Invincibility

CTRL+SHIFT+N - Finish the Mission

STRG-I - God-Mode for Soldiers

STRG+SHIFT+N - Win the Mission!

Turok 2: Seeds of Evil

Type these in during the game

TROMPEM - Big hands and feet mode.

BIGBADNOODLE - Big head mode.

HELLOSTICKY - Stick mode.

LILLIPUTIAN - Tiny mode.

PICASSO - Pen and Ink mode.

HENRYSBILERP - Gouraud mode.

YOQUIEROJUAN - Juans cheat.

MNOPRULEZ - Do nothing.

LEGOMANIAK - Zach attack cheat.

INeedaups - Blackout mode.

WIZARDOFOZ - "MMMM... Tasty fruity stripes".

OBLIVIONISOUTTHERE - Big cheat.

JANESSPECIALWORLD - Jane's cheat.



Rainbow Six

During gameplay press the apostrophe key ('), then type in the following codes:

TEAMGOD - God mode for all team members

AVATARGOD - God mode for player

5FINGERDISCOUNT - replenishes ammo

EXPLORE - toggles victory conditions on/off

DEBUGKEYS - debugs enabled or disabled keys

SILENTBUTDEADLY - fart every time you walk

NOBRAINER - turns off AI

TURNPUNCHKICK - players become 2D

MEGANOGGIN - Big Head mode

BIGNOGGIN - everyone has a big head

CLODHOPPER - big feet and hands

1-900 - very heavy breathing

STUMPY - deforms characters

Railroad Tycoon 2

Press **tab** to get the small cursor and type any of the following:

BigfootGold - win with gold victory.

BigfootSilver - win with silver victory.

BigfootBronze - win with bronze victory.

Bigfoot - win with gold victory.

BoBo - lose scenario.

King of the hill - gives your character \$100,000.

Powerball - gives company \$100 million.

Slush fund - gives company \$1 million.

Let me in - gives access to all denied territories.

Speed Racer - doubles maximum train speeds.

AMD103 - converts all engines to AMD-103's at expense of profits.

Show me the trains - gives all engines.

Overtime - give extra time in scenario

Viagra - increases city sizes.

Heretic 2

To use these codes simply enter them in the console ('~' key toggles console)

angermonsters - monsters get angry

crazymonsters - monsters out for blood

kiwi - clipping on/off

showcoords - show coordinates

weapprev - select previous weapon

weapnext - select next weapon

Item Spawn Codes:

spawn <item> - create an item where <item> is one of the following item names:

item_weapon_firewall

item_weapon_maceballs

item_weapon_magicmissile

item_weapon_phoenixbow

item_weapon_redrain_bow

item_weapon_sphereofannihilation

item_defense_meteorbarrier

item_defense_polymorph

item_defense_powerup

item_defense_ringofrepulsion

item_defense_shield

item_defense_teleport

item_health_full

item_health_half

item_mana_combo_half

item_mana_combo_quarter

item_mana_defensive_full

item_mana_defensive_half

item_mana_offensive_full

item_mana_offensive_half

item_puzzle_canyonkey

item_puzzle_cloudkey

item_puzzle_cog

item_puzzle_crystal

item_puzzle_dungeonkey

item_puzzle_highpriestesskey

item_puzzle_highpriestesssymbol

Ashton, Ashton, he's our man, if he can't fix it...someone else probably can!

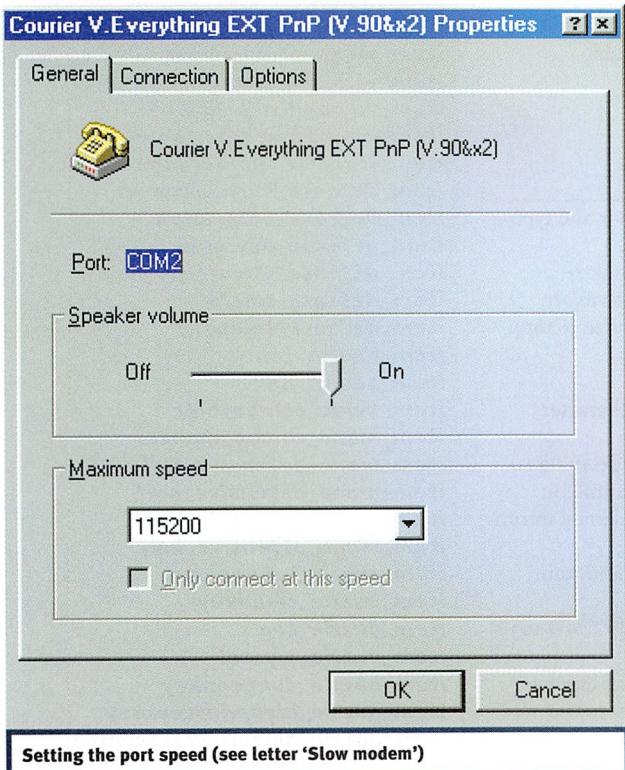
When you write, remember to include as much pertinent information as possible. Send your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT and any associated *.INI files for Windows that might tell me more about your problem. Give me as detailed an explanation as you can and be sure to include as much detail as possible about your PC. Feel free to email your questions or, if you want to snail mail, please remember to write clearly or better still, print your letters. Please note that due to the volume of messages we receive, we cannot guarantee a response to your queries.

Setup
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick St
Redfern
NSW 2016
setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

Nifty idea

Q I used a Mac the other day (oh no!) and was impressed by its auto turn off feature. Just hold the funny looking button on the keyboard, then press enter, and POW!, it's off. I was wondering if I could do this on my PC. Does Windows poke or output anything to any port when it is at the "It is now safe to turn off your computer" screen? If not, is there any way of making some software to do it? And what part of the hardware would I attach a relay or such? Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Thomas Jacobs.
Internet



A Well, firstly I strongly doubt that Windows sends any command to an external port when it shuts down, and the 'You can safely turn off your computer now' (gee, thanks Bill) message is just a bitmap. Secondly, it's great for you to want to try and implement this sort of thing, but it's already done and most of us are using it!

All you need is an ATX case with an ATX power supply. Windows 98, among one of its better features, will turn the power off for you when you shutdown on an ATX system (this is a function of the ATX design). Now, if you've got one of those niftier BX motherboards, like an ASUS one, you can also turn your PC on with the touch of a key, just like the Macs. Tres' cool.

Old Voodoo

Q G'day, I have a small question that I was hoping that you could answer for me. I recently disposed of my old Pentium 166 (sniff) and purchased a Pentium II 400 with 128MB RAM (yay). The thing is that I moved my old 4MB Voodoo 1 card into my new computer. I have heard that it will actually retard the performance of my new computer.

Is this true? If so to what degree? Thanks for your valuable time.

Adam B
Internet

A Not really. A better way of looking at it is that the Voodoo1 can only deliver a set level of performance, and that level is easily reached with your new processor. So, when it comes to 3D games they'll always be going as fast as the Voodoo1 can deliver them, it just so happens that this speed isn't as fast as more advanced cards like the Voodoo2.

Which CPU?

Q First I'd like to congratulate you guys on your Fab Mag. My computer is a Cyrix P200 with 48Mb RAM and

SETUP LETTER OF THE MONTH
New thing! Send your questions into Dr Ash and if it's a good question, we'll give you free stuff! Woo!

Rated RAM

Q Technical Guru Swami, can you please explain what problems, if any, are there if I put a 64M SDRAM module PC100 rated into my PC. My specs are:

Asus P2L97 AGP Intel 440LX motherboard
PII 300

64MB SDRAM (2 x 32MB modules).

Please advise. I have spoken to a few so called techs and it's still not any clearer.

Rockape
Internet

A All things being relatively equal, it should be fine. PC100 SDRAM is rated to operate at 100MHz and below. They also have a little thing called an SPD module that tells capable motherboards exactly how fast the RAM can operate (CAS/RAS settings, wait states and so on), saving people from trial and error in the BIOS. Cool eh?

For anybody out there considering buying PC100 SDRAM, if you intend to overclock your precious pal try and get a hold of CAS-2 SDRAM. Technically, PC100 SDRAM is CAS-3 meaning it can use a CAS (column access strobe) of 3. This rates it up to about 112MHz maximum operation. CAS-2 SDRAM is slightly more expensive and can handle speeds up to 125MHz and sometimes 133MHz. Why is this important? Well, for example I have my PII 400MHz overclocked to 448MHz by using a bus speed of 112MHz, so my SDRAM has to be able to handle 112MHz. To be sure, I've got CAS-2 SDRAM in my faithful friend, so although it could use 125MHz and higher, it's going to be stable for sure at 112MHz.

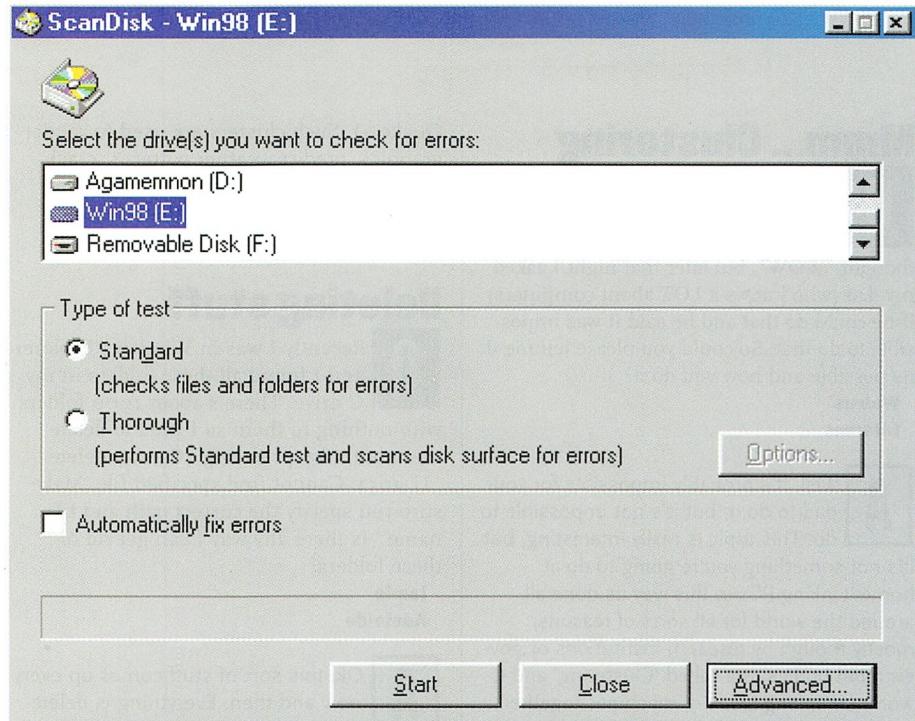
I have a problem that has been annoying me for a while now. On Quicktime the processor registers as a 80486 when it is actually a 686. I don't know if this is slowing my computer down at all but if you could shed some light on this it would be greatly appreciated.

Brett Foster
Internet

A No it's not slowing your computer down. All that you're seeing is Quicktime incorrectly identifying your CPU. This is quite common with diagnostic software that is outdated, or programs that like to seem geeky by displaying information about your PC, since these programs aren't always able to recognise newer CPUs. It's not important that Quicktime identify your CPU, it's just an informative feature.

Slow modem

Q Greetings and salutations my friends I have a little quiz which I hope you can help me with. I'm obviously connected to the internet and I'm using a 56k modem. The problem is that



I'm connecting at a shocking speed of 19.2k and I ain't pleased. Please help this lost soul in cyberspace.

Bart
Internet

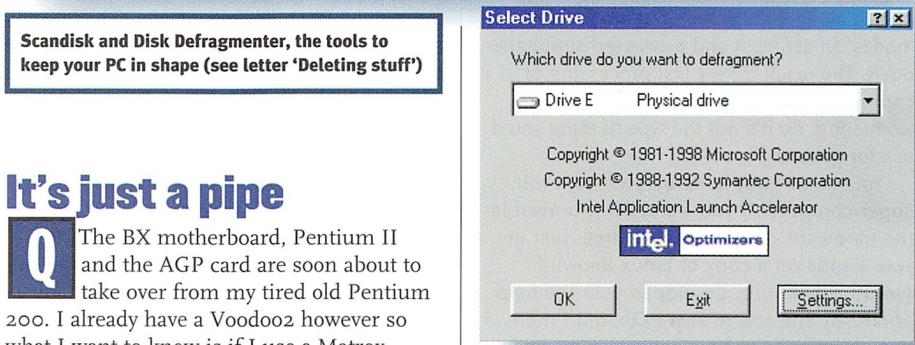
A Ok, your first step is to make sure you're dialling a 56k point-of-presence (POP) for your ISP, as most ISPs have different numbers of 33.6k and 56k connections. Next make sure your port speed is set to 115200, to check this open up the profile for your connection and then from the 'General tab' select 'Configure'. There'll be an option 'Maximum speed', set this to 115200. Lastly, make sure you're not issuing any silly commands to your modem. In its default state it should try for 56k connections, so make sure 'Extra Settings' doesn't have any extra settings. Also, make sure you're using the right modem profile for your modem. And lastly, if you see Windows telling you that it's connecting at 115200, it's just because it's reading your port rate. If you're using a proper modem profile, Windows can often read the connect string from your modem and display your actual connection speed, but it's not uncommon for Windows to display the port speed instead.

Outdating PC

Q I need a new computer desperately. There are so many processors to choose from, not to mention hard drives, 3D cards etc. My question is if I purchase a new computer now based on an Intel Pentium II either 350/400Mhz with a Voodoo2 how long will it be till my investments are obsolete? I heard recently that Intel plan to release a Pentium III and 3Dfx the Voodoo3. I don't want to pay a lot of money for a 400Mhz and find that I have to upgrade it in 6 months.

Leonard
Internet

A This is a good question. Six months ago I would have said your new PC purchase of a PII 400 and Voodoo2 would be ahead of the times. Now it's pretty much the standard. How long until it becomes obsolete? That's tricky. Firstly you have to measure obsolescence by the application of the PC. A PII 400 and a Voodoo2 will be lighting fast for old games such as Quake II and newer games such as Tribes. However, try throwing Half-Life at it with all the OpenGL visual optimisation hacks enabled, and your shiny PII 400 Voodoo2 system was out of date before it was even built. Some games are very demanding, others are not, and in the near future you'll see both types of games released. So will this standard system move to obsolescence in the next six months? It won't be obsolete, it just won't be cutting edge. It'll still be a major beast PC for all but the most recent and demanding games, it all depends on the games you play.



It's just a pipe

Q The BX motherboard, Pentium II and the AGP card are soon about to take over from my tired old Pentium 200. I already have a Voodoo2 however so what I want to know is if I use a Matrox G200 AGP card which gives a clearer crisper picture with its 32 bit Z Buffer and have it passing through my Voodoo2 with its 16 Bit Z buffer will the end result be the Matrox's 32 bit or the Voodoo2's 16 bit Z buffer?

IMP
Internet

A Ah, no. Firstly you're getting your terms mixed up. The G200 has a crisper and clearer image because it's been very well designed by Matrox, not because of a Z buffer. One of its 3D features is 32 bit colour rendering, which other 3D cards don't have, but again this has nothing to do with a Z buffer. Secondly, when you pipe a card through a Voodoo2 via a passthrough, the signal is not being touched by the Voodoo2, hence the term 'pass through'. While your G200 is running, the Voodoo2 is off and vice versa. However, the act of passing a signal through a loopback cable degrades the quality of the signal, and it's not as efficient as piping the signal directly to your monitor.

SLI plus one

Q I got another Voodoo 2 for Christmas and I already have 2 Voodoo 2's in SLI. Can I put a 3rd Voodoo 2 in my computer and hook it up with the other ones so I have 3 Voodoo 2's inside? I'll give you 3 cases of Coke.

Jacel
Internet

A Ah, no. Despite my appreciation of the liquid gold that is Coke, no amount of guru swami Tech Setup knowledge (or any amount of Spice Girls cuddly play things) would change the fact that 2 Voodoo2's is the limit when it comes to creating the glory that is SLI. Bummer, eh?

if I purchase a new computer now based on an Intel Pentium II...with a Voodoo2 how long will it be till my investments are obsolete?

Mmm... Clustering

Q I read an article about Compaq "tying" together 72 Computers to create a super computer and I thought "WOW", but later that night I asked my dad (who knows a LOT about computers) if he could do that and he said it was impossible to do that. So could you please tell me if its possible and how you do it?

Walrus
Internet

A Well, it's probably impossible for your dad to do it, but it's not impossible to do. This topic is really interesting, but it's not something you're going to do at home. Linking PCs in this way us done all around the world for all sorts of reasons, mostly though by research institutions or government bodies. It's called 'Clustering' and it works by linking loads of machines together over a network. When a processing task comes along it's divided up among the 'nodes' (machines) and processed simultaneously. The result is very fast processing of complex problems. And just in case you're wondering, no it's not the type of thing you'd use for games!

You can, however, setup your own mini super-computer if you want. All you need is the hardware - the software is free. Just get your hands on a copy of Linux Beowulf (www.beowulf.org, developed with the help of NASA) and you're away. Oh, did I mention you'll need to be a network guru and a programmer? While such clusters are nice, programs have to be written in such a way to take advantage of the cluster, and so if you want to use it you'll need to rewrite

Quake :-). Such clusters are used to render graphics, predict weather patterns, crack codes and so on. A Linux Beowulf cluster was used for the graphics animation in *Titanic*, for example. Cool stuff, really.

Deleting stuff

Q Recently I was in Windows Explorer and I found all these folders in my C drive. There's about 1900 folders with nothing in them so I tried to delete them but it keeps saying: 'Cannot delete _U_1052: Cannot find specified file. Make sure you specify the correct path and file-name.' Is there any way I can get rid of these folders?

Jamie
Adelaide

A Ok, this sort of stuff comes up every now and then. Everything is deletable, generally, even if it's marked 'read-only' (that just means you get prompted if you really want to delete it). However if the OS thinks that it can't delete it for some reason, chances are you have file system errors. Solution: run Scandisk. If that can't fix it, you're in trouble. Normally Scandisk will have no problems fixing the file system, but if it's severely damaged you're likely to end up losing data.

Here's Doctor Ashton's guide to keeping a healthy system. Once a month do the following:

- 1) Delete anything you don't need. Clear up old downloads, temporary directories, etc.
- 2) Scandisk the drive
- 3) Defragment it

Follow these rules and your bestest bud will provide many hours of gaming love.

Tech Tips

Tips and tricks to make using your PC a more pleasant and enjoyable experience. Really.

A tip from Alex Pamount:

So, are you sick of having to listen to that dial up tone? Are you a late night Internet Surfer and need to connect without any-one hearing? Well try this:

Open up My Computer —> Dial Up Networking.

Next, click on the **Properties** tab of your ISP and then click **Configure** for your modem under the **General Tab**, then click **Connection** then **Advanced**. Under **Extra Settings**, add: **Mo.**

Now, next time you dial up, you shouldn't hear that annoying connection tone.

And now for a gratuitous picture of something completely droolworthy, a shot from the up-coming *Babylon 5* game, woo!



Virtual Memory



These settings can adversely affect system performance and should be adjusted by advanced users and system administrators only.

Virtual memory

- Let Windows manage my virtual memory settings. (Recommended)
- Let me specify my own virtual memory settings.

Hard disk: D:\ 595MB Free

Minimum: 128

Maximum: 128

Disable virtual memory. (Not recommended)

OK

Cancel

Setting virtual memory

Windows worries

Q My system constantly crashes, freezes etc. I've just installed Memturbo and I am constantly only left with about 1-3 meg of free Ram. My current system is an AMD K6-2 with 64 MB SDRAM. Could you give me a hand on finding what could be sucking all my memory or how to fix it, please?

Glen Wilson

Internet

A Welcome to Windows. Don't stress about the free memory, Windows uses a dynamic file cache which will shrink as more memory is required. The crashes are unlikely to be caused by memory problems, but to be sure go to Start —> Settings —> Control Panel —> System —> Performance —> Virtual Memory and check your virtual memory. If it's on the default settings, and your C: drive is running out of space, crashes can occur when Windows can't swap out any more memory.

PC PowerPlay How-to Handbook

I just bought

\$7.95

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PORTAL ENGINES

Most new 3D action games boast 'Portal Technology'. So, what the hell does it mean?

Interesting new developments in 3D engines have been occurring of late. Well, actually, not necessarily new, but a 3D procedure known as portal technology has been in the news and looks to be the new standard for 3D engines in the future. Of interest is that the vapourware Prey engine is being designed around the principles of a portal engine.

As a side note, 3D Realms are claiming that Prey is still going to be developed but was put on hold due to hardware requirements being too high and Duke Nukem Forever being made a priority instead. Or so the development team says, at any rate.

New Improved 3D

A portal engine, however, is an intriguing concept because it redefines the way 3D is produced. Currently Binary Space Partition trees (called BSP trees) are used and offer an overall rendering model. Quake, Quake 2 and Quake 3 use BSP tree engines with Carmack already confirming that their next 3D game (Trinity?) will use a portal engine.

An example of the process, and a type of portal engine is the old game Descent. Descent used a method known as "connected cubes" for hidden-surface determination. Although Descent doesn't really use "cubes" as such, it does use six-sided structures that can be deformed into any shape, provided they remain convex.

Building a world out of these "cubes" is somewhat restrictive, but the general principle can be extended to more complex shapes giving the game designers more freedom in the type of worlds that can be created. When combined with Binary Space Partition Trees, portals provide a fast and powerful way of rendering complex scenery.

Portal engines essentially build the world around a series of structures, or to be correctly termed, sectors. With any 3D

engine, if you wanted to render a scene of 3D polygons you would need to know the order in which these polygons should be drawn. For example, the engines algorithm may draw the polygons that are far away first and then proceed with the polygons that are closer (back to front drawing). But how do you sort polygons like this? In general there is no easy way to do this and there are even cases where it is simply not possible to sort them at all.

A portal engine differs from front to back drawing by restricting the way polygons are placed within the 3D world. This does limit the usability of the technique and is the reason that portal engines will be mainly useful for indoor rendering. The big advantage however is that for an indoor engine, it's very fast and for the developer easy to implement.

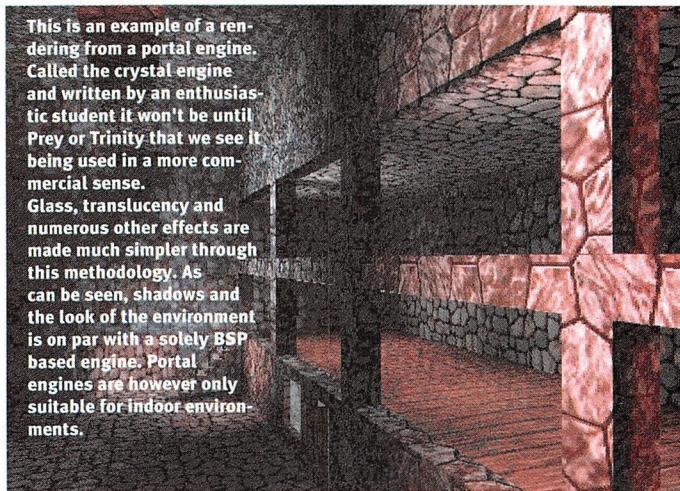
Within a portal world, it's the sectors that give it the advantage, a sector being a convex and closed set of polygons. What this means is that there is no way out of the sector without hitting a polygon. Therefore the polygons form a set of 'walls' (and possibly a floor and a ceiling).

Virtual Doorways

The way sectors are then connected is using a portal. As an analogy, imagine building a 3D world room by room and just connecting them together like Lego. The portal that connects the sectors is essentially just a special kind of polygon. When rendering, all normal polygons are drawn, but when the renderer encounters a portal it just starts the next sector that it's linked to.

The beauty of all this is that you can describe any indoor environment that you want (although you may need a lot of portals to do so in some cases). As a level designer, if you wanted a concave room? No problem, just make enough convex sectors

This is an example of a rendering from a portal engine. Called the crystal engine and written by an enthusiastic student it won't be until Prey or Trinity that we see it being used in a more commercial sense. Glass, translucency and numerous other effects are made much simpler through this methodology. As can be seen, shadows and the look of the environment is on par with a solely BSP based engine. Portal engines are however only suitable for indoor environments.



for your needs and connect them using portals.

Portals also bring with them some new interesting possibilities for play. Due to the nature of the engine, it's actually possible with portals to say launch a grenade through a teleporter and have it emerge in the new sector the teleporter leads to.

Overall, the advantages to a portal engine are :

* It's fast to render. Makes it possible to create dynamic worlds because portals can be turned on or off.

* The worlds are easy to define. You can do several neat tricks with portals (such as firing through teleporters) and no overdraw in rendering which offers a major speed gain.

* The portal technique is also very efficient for only considering polygons that are likely to be visible. As a consequence, the portal technique is suitable for very large worlds (there is no overhead in having sectors far away which cannot be reached in a straight line from your camera).

* There are some slight disadvantages though, portals aren't as yet a general technique and are not suited for outdoor environments. Even indoor worlds need to be defined in a special way.

Overall portal engines look to be an exciting new procedure in the world of 3D. Particularly if it means larger, more complex environments to play in.



The Great ION STORM Debacle

John Romero, the self appointed God of 3D, famous due to his part in Doom is having a spot of bother within his new company Ion Storm. Now as gamers we don't take delight in any developers misfortune but it does have to be said that the goings on at Ion Storm play like a midday soapie.

Being termed on the Internet as "Iongate" it all started in 98

with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Ion quitting to join new team GOD (Gathering Of Developers). Next to exit was the skin artist, quitting to join id and elite programmer Corinne Yu quitting to join 3D Realms.

Next goes Chris DeSimone leaving to join Terminal Reality. Through all of this, perhaps as a form of damage control an official statement from Eidos (distributors of Daikatana) appears saying that Daikatana is in beta and on time for release. A beta by definition means that the application has all it's features,



and only the bugs need to be sorted out. Artificial Intelligence would definitely warrant as a feature, as would the Daikatana itself yet these aren't in the game yet. It can be assumed that Daikatana is not in Beta at all.

The great exodus continues with Jeff Wand quitting to join Red Storm Entertainment and now things start to really take a turn for the worse. Usenet humorously terms its posts "Bye-Katana" and Ion loses 8 people. Here are some exerts from the public letter.

"The signees of the following statement have decided to hand Ion Storm their resignation, effective immediately."

"...Walking out now has been an extremely difficult decision, and although we're leaving as a group, there are individual reasons for us doing so. We will not be disclosing these reasons to the public since they vary somewhat for each person, and also because we have no desire to start a war of words with Ion Storm."

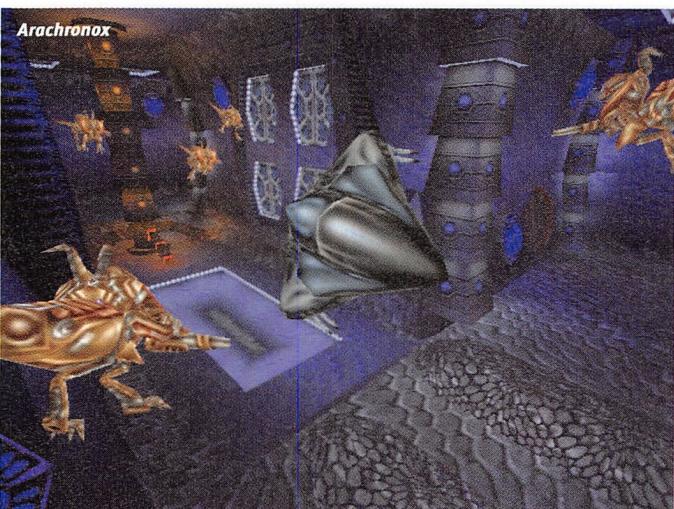
- Matt Hooper - Level Designer, Daikatana
- Sverre Kvernmo - Lead Level Designer, Daikatana
- Will Loconto - Audio Director, all projects
- Mike Maynard - Programmer, Daikatana
- Mark Morgan - Artist, Daikatana
- David Namaksy - Lead Level Designer, Anachronox
- Steve Rescoe - Level Designer, Daikatana
- Jonathan Wright - Lead Programmer, Daikatana"

Things couldn't seem to sink any lower for Ion - but then they did. A certain Christine Biederman, journalist for the Dallas Observer opened up a massive can of worms regarding staff turn around.

In her article which appeared on the 14th of January, Christine states that Wilson's leaving was due to a coup led by CEO Todd Porter and art director Jerry O'Flaherty. Wright was fired because he tried to incite a rebellion among Ion's employees however he claims that Ion tried to cut him out from an impending buyout by Eidos. It's then reported that of Ion's 85 employees, more than half have quit, or been let go. Of the "famous 8" that left, well, they ended up in Wilson's newly formed company.

Yet the story continues. Christine uncovers that Ion is actually looking for more capital. They've run through their \$26 million and are spending at a rate of nearly \$900,000 per month. With the costs sky rocketing and Eidos as distributor you can be sure that they're going to try and get any title out as quickly as possible, just to try and recuperate some of the invested money.

It's the potentially illegal aspect of the Dallas Observer article however that starts to really turn heads. Quoting internal private emails between Jerry O'Flaherty and Mike Wilson, gems such as this are uncovered. "[Tell Wilson], 'You better be f#@!ing glad we wrote off your car and house, you f#@!ing rat-faced bitch,'"





This leak within Ion was to add even more headaches to the steady public relations nightmare that was occurring. A quote from William Haskins, director of Web Development summed it up perfectly. "Either people who are no longer with the company know a whole lot more than the people who are here, or we've got a leak that the Titanic can sail through."

And the Titanic went right through. Gaminginsider.com which through an unusual character known only as BitchX gets hold of a company wide email from Todd Porter asking for any offers regarding the sale of his Lotus. An investigation is made to try and uncover the leak but not before upper management's own fatal mistake.

The final straw in email dilemmas came when some were posted to the company server with the intention of being later disposed of. But someone forgot to hit "delete" before the employees got there.

It wasn't long before someone found them and were distributed throughout the whole company. In it, the company CEO giggled about planned firings, told Eidos the employees who left "were shit," and they were getting rid of hardworking colleagues to hire old chums.

Ion's response to the Dallas Observer article has been to bring out the lawyers. Christine Biederman has been subpoenaed by and asked to give up her sources for the article. Humorously in this situation Ion are their own worst enemy. Who needs sources when all over the Internet part of Dai Katana's design document has been leaked and Ion Storm and Bloodshot (the famous 8) have engaged in a flame war on a message board at www.planetcrap.com.

To read the whole Dallas Observer article if you have access to the Internet, shoot over to <http://www.dallasobserver.com/1999/011499/feature1-1.html>

Just to show that we're not down on Ion Storm in any way, here's the latest screenshots from 2 of their games in development. Anachronox and Bye-Katana, err Daikatana.

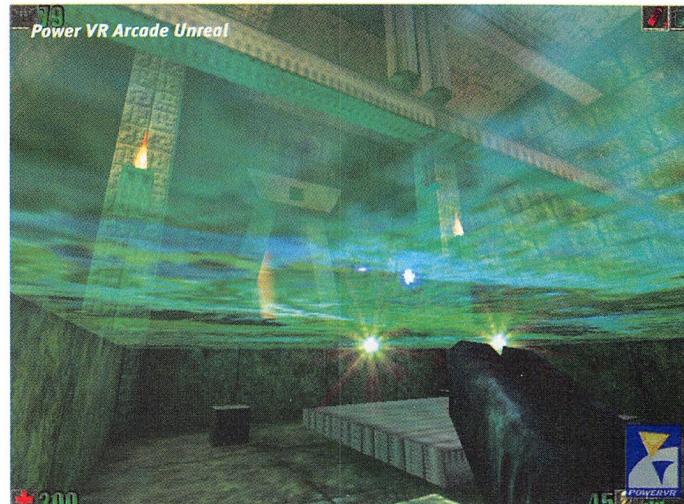
As can be seen in Anachronox, the modifications to the Quake 2 engine have been extremely well done. The character models and numerous different characters are exceptional. Anachronox is a first person action RPG set in the future where "Sylvester 'Sly' Boots and Stiletto Anyway (what's the deal with the names?) search for a long dead alien race with advanced technology.

In contrast Daikatana is about a mystical magical sword of all incredible power that is of course abused by generic evil bad guy. You and two other NPC's (Daikatana will feature AI characters to assist the player) have to penetrate the impenetrable and destroy the undestroyable over different time periods from the past to the future. Trust me, don't read the Daikatana story off the Ion Storm web site, if the cliched writing style doesn't induce nausea, the wooden characters and ridiculous dialog will. But hey, we don't play FPS action games for the story.

S3 Savage 4

S3 still want the market back. Everyone agreed that the Savage was a step in the right direction for S3 but competition in the form of the Riva TNT has kept it out of steady sales.

The Savage4 GT then is S3's next attempt to become number 1. The card will carry 16MB of video RAM and run at a core



clock of 125MHz. The Pro version of the chip/card should premier with up to 32MB of video RAM and a core of 143MHz (woah!). In terms of features, the Savage 4 offers a Unified Memory Bus to provide up to a 32MB frame buffer plus all these features:

- Single-Pass Multi-Texturing Support
- True Color Rendering
- S3TC Texture Compression
- Single-Cycle Trilinear Filtering
- Bump Mapping
- Full Scene Anti-Aliasing
- Anisotropic Filtering
- Vertex Buffers
- 8-Bit Stencil Buffer
- Full Triangle Setup Engine
- Support for all DX6 Blending Modes
- Specular Lighting and Diffuse Shading
- W Buffer
- W Fog
- 32-Bit Z-Buffering
- MPEG-2 Video Textures
- Sprite Anti-Aliasing
- Palletized Textures
- Perspective Correction
- Vertex and Table Fog
- Triangle Strips and Fans
- Reflection Mapping
- Texture Morphing
- Shadows

- Procedural Textures
- Atmospheric Effects
- 4 x AGP

Power VR Arcade

The wait is killing me. I need to test a Power VR 250 (series 2) for this could be the card that dethrones the TNT as the 2D/3D king. Just take a look at the 2 Unreal screenshots off a PVR 250 to understand my enthusiasm. It must be close, though, for Videologic have just announced the ArcadePC Video Graphics Board. The Videologic R-Cade Vision 250 is a high performance combined 2D and 3D graphics solution specifically designed for ArcadePC applications.

Based around the PowerVR 250, the R-Cade Vision fully utilises AGP 2X, with sideband addressing. It also features 32MB of SDRAM for frame buffer and texture storage.

Capable of the highest frame rates and resolutions, the R-Cade Vision 250 is also designed to





provide stunning output on standard 15KHz, 25KHz and 31KHz low-resolution arcade system monitors. Also catering to the arcade market is Videologic's R-Cade Master, the only fully integrated solution available for arcade interfacing needs.

The R-Cade Master board provides interfacing to analogue joysticks, steering wheels, coin mechanisms, buttons, lamps and ticket dispensers. The Master also provides a large (8KB) non-volatile storage area for holding key game information including coin drops, high scores and configuration data.

The R-Cade Master can be mounted inside a PC, or externally, as the only connection to the PC is a serial cable making it ideally secure. There's also an optional R-Cade Force daughter card providing force feedback for up to 4 inputs.

What all this ultimately means to us as gamers is the reality of going to an arcade, playing a Power VR game, then being able to play the same game identically on our home PC's (Power VR installed of course). Videologic have to be recognised for this purely for keeping their word. They made the promise of arcade games on home PC's 2 years ago and have been working to keep that promise. Hmm, now what about Dreamcast compatibility as well.

Quick Bytes

Unreal Tournament

Unreal tournament is Epic's next big project and the sequel to Unreal. Taking nothing from Epic in anyway, but it almost seems a little childish. id are making an online only Quake in Quake 3 and now Epic are following suit almost immediately. Perhaps this is just some healthy competition.

Unreal Tournament will essentially allow to play against bots on 4 different team-based game-types; Domination, Assault, Capture the Flag and an improved Deathmatch. You play through a ladder against differing opponents in different venues and with different rules to try to become Unreal Grand Master. You can obviously also play the new game types on-line.

In terms of single player, the Unreal Tournament bots are supposed to be quite intelligent. They now about weapon strategy, camping, and playing on teams. You can even ask your bot teammates to support your attack or defensive strategies or just leave them alone to do their own thing.

X-Wing Alliance

Hopefully available as you read this the 4th game in the X-Wing series is nearing completion. The action takes place in the Star Wars universe after the Battle of Hoth with you playing as a member of one of two rival houses competing with each other.

In both storylines you join the Rebellion in the fight against the Empire and get to pilot the Millennium Falcon. The plot ends with the final battle at the second Deathstar, where you plunge into the heart to destroy it.

X-Wing Alliance will feature fully 3D cockpits (like in most flight sims), twice the number of polygons for each object than in XvT, damage effects, lens flare and twice the number of ships supported per sector. This means there can now be up to 4 sectors per mission and 256 ships.



SPECULAR SPOTLIGHT

Kingpin

There are currently numerous first person games in development all competing for our gaming dollar. Which is great news for us. Developers aware of the competition are making efforts above and beyond to produce titles of unbelievable quality, of which Kingpin is definitely a contendor.

Another to modify the licensed Quake 2 engine, Xatrix Entertainment's goals are to take on and better Half-Life. Kingpin's most noticeable feature is its gritty Southside Chicago's style atmosphere. The look of the levels, which are set in a "fictional retro-tech urban world," is definitely 1930s Chicago, but the characters are all modern-day inner-city hoodlums, the kind of guys we imagine behind us when we're at our ATMs.

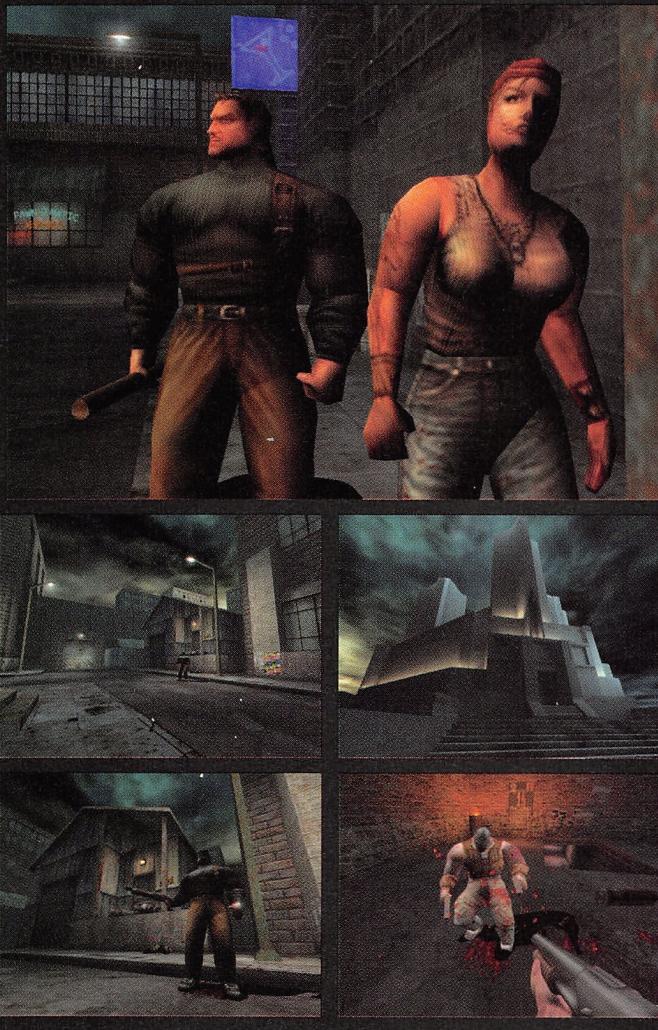
Unique to Kingpin is that character models are constructed from 15 different hit zones, each of which can be assigned a specific pain reaction. There's even animation unique to certain damage. For instance, after one battle, it's possible to see an enemy retreating, dragging his leg and leaving a dense trail of blood behind him.

There's also NPC interaction to which you can be polite, insulting, or neutral. NPC's of course respond to this and other situations. For example, if you spend too much time talking to a female character, her jealous boyfriend might be scripted to become hostile. Also, wounded characters flee and if you drew a gun on a bunch of thugs wielding lead pipes, they'll run away, too.

Taking a different approach to the bigger and better guns as the game progresses, Xatrix has set things up so that the more you use a weapon, the more your accuracy improves.

For those into rap/funk, Cypress Hill will provide four songs from their upcoming album for Kingpin's soundtrack, as well as providing some of the voice-overs for the game's characters.

According to Interplay, Kingpin is due for release in autumn.



Net Game News

This month's Net gaming lowdown

NewsBites

■ There's been a brand new multiplayer map posted on the www for Bungie's latest offering, Myth II - Soulblighter. Called Leagues from Nowhere, the map has adjustable difficulty levels which affect the way game is played. For the file and for more information, go to www.bungie.net.

■ Originally, it was 989 Studios that were the development team on EverQuest. They key team split and formed RedEye Interactive, though stayed with Sony to work on EverQuest. Well, they've gone through another name change! To avoid any confusion, the team working on EverQuest is now known as Verant Interactive, in conjunction with the original 989 Studios team. Verant Interactive are set to announce some new online only titles in the very near future. Watch this space for details.

■ Boo! Hiss! As much as Thief is an exceptional single player game, the thought of a multiplayer game using the same principle of stealth and cunning had us weak at the knees. Apparently, Looking Glass (the developers) were planning to release a multiplayer update to the game sometime after its release. In an official statement, Looking Glass have announced that there will be no multiplayer feature added to Thief. Instead, the Thief team is helping the System Shock 2 team implement a sturdy multiplayer engine in the upcoming title. Looking Glass also took the opportunity to announce that a sequel to Thief was in the works. No multiplayer feature has been confirmed though.

■ Blizzard have released another batch of impressive figures relating to Battle.net. There are now over 2.1 million members. StarCraft is the most played game, with over 4.7 million games played in the first two months since its release. Impressive which ever way you look at it.



Unreal Tournament

A silence descended upon the office of PC PowerPlay not too soon after a preview beta version of Unreal Tournament found its way into our hands. It wasn't a dramatic silence mind you - it was more that of quiet anticipation.

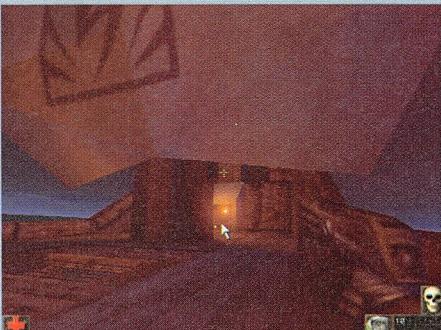
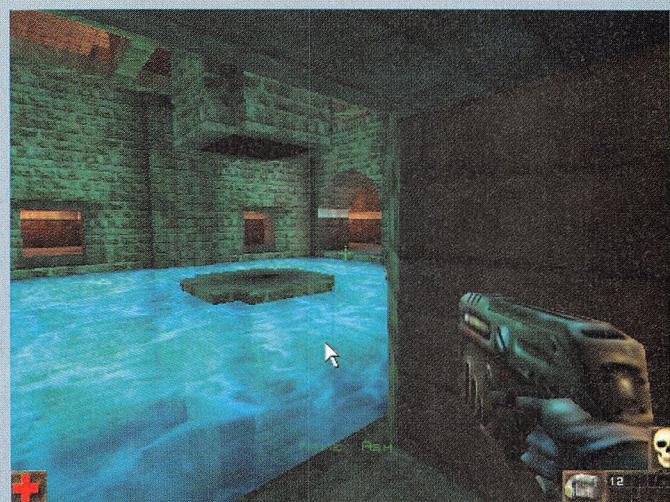
This is the next round of first person action shooters, ladies and gentleman. Unreal took Quake 2 a step further, as did Half-Life to Unreal. And as you are all aware, the next offering from the people you just can't afford to ignore, id software, are releasing their next 3D action title as a multiplayer only venture. And Unreal Tournament is Epic Games' answer to Quake 3 Arena. After Unreal, you wouldn't be wrong thinking that Epic might have what it takes.

Unreal Tournament is not the title that'll show if Epic Games fluked it with Unreal, unfortunately. That'll be revealed with Unreal 2. In the very short time we got to play UT (it arrived the day before deadline), it became apparent quickly that Unreal Tournament is more like the great big expansion pack Unreal needed to make it a force in the multiplayer arena. Visually, the engine is

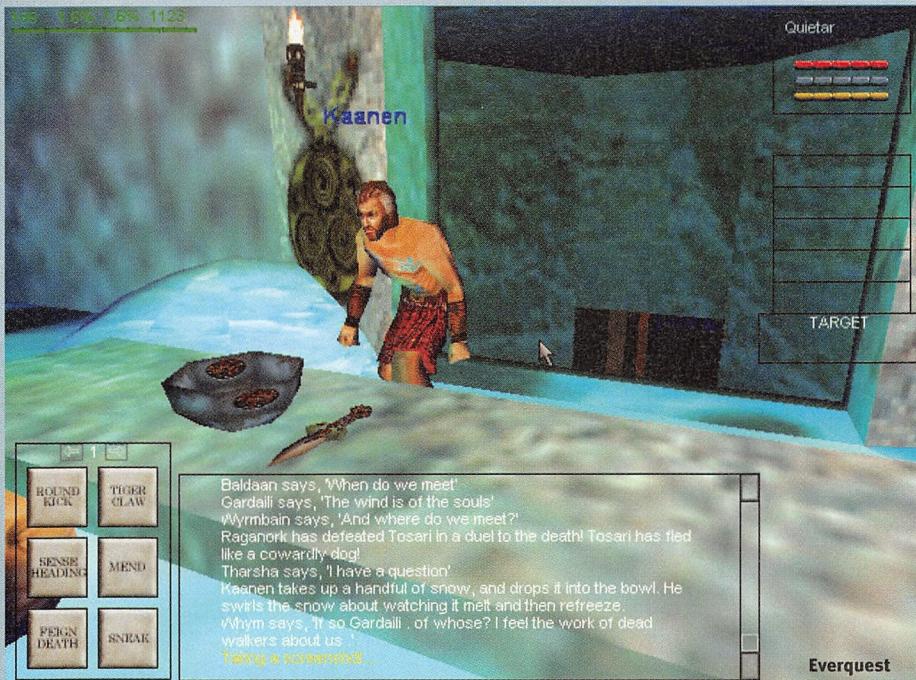
Unreal Tournament. Not quite the quantum leap over Unreal that you may have expected, but still plenty of fun

hardly any leap over Unreal. Unreal Tournament feels very much like Unreal. Depending on your point of view, this will be either a good or a bad thing.

What Unreal Tournament does do well though, is nail the multiplayer experience. There are 30 different maps to play on (all rather diverse), 3 new weapons, 11 different styles of multiplayer to play, and a brand-spanking-new menu driven interface. This new interface makes setting up and tinkering with UT a breeze. Last but not least, the feature that brought a smile to our faces was the way your opponents name gently glides on screen as your targeting cursor is pointed in their general direction. Too cool.



Online Role Playing Games



Everquest

Ultima Online

Developers: Origin

Ultima Online regularly changes its spots in the form of frequent patch releases, and the latest one is no exception. Included now is

coloured ore, which allows armourers to create coloured armour. You can also grant Karma to other players to help with their notoriety. The next major update will be a revamp to the thief character, with new skills and a greater incentive to play as a shady character.

The quest for an Aussie UO server is far from over. Australis Dragon and Paladin Dragon have set up a web page to help put some pressure on OSI regarding a local UO server. Origin argue that we won't get one till more people buy and play UO, while most Aussie players argue that they won't play the game till something is done about the lag. Visit <http://uoc.newsninja.com/anzp/> to make your voice heard.

EA Australia has finally released UO game time locally. For \$49.95, get a code for three months gaming time. This ends the requirement of a credit card to play the game.

EverQuest

Developers: Sony

In brief, Phase 3 of the beta test has ended and there only remains a brief Phase 4 testing period and EverQuest will be ready for release! It won't be long now...

Middle Earth

Developers: Sierra

Middle Earth is the new online RPG currently in development based on Tolkein's fantasy work. It's still in early development, but

things are coming along nicely. Middle Earth is set for an early 2000 release.

The official ME web page is running a trivia contest, with the prize being a coffer of riches once the game is released. We recommend just entering to show off your Tolkein lore. Go to <http://www.middle-earth.com/maps/immigration.html> to enter.

Official Guide to UO

The official guide to Ultima Online is still available at all good games retailers and it's chock full of all things good and helpful. The kind people at Ozisoft have given us three copies of the guide to give away. To win, answer the following question:

How many different elementals are there in UO The Second Age, and what are they?

Write the answer, your name and address on the back of an envelope and send it to:

UO Guide Comp
 PC PowerPlay,
 78 Renwick St
 Redfern, NSW 2016
 Entries close May 13th.



TOP 5 MULTIPLAYER GAMES

1. Half-life
2. Star Siege Tribes
3. Quake 2
4. Starcraft
5. Ultima Online

This month we were inundated with nominations for Half-Life. With an incredible single player experience, Valve have also nailed the multiplayer side of things. The result - lots of very happy Half-Life fanatics. The other surprise was StarSiege Tribes. Even though it's only just been released, its reputation has ensured that a huge following was ready and waiting for action from day one. It's also the game that NGN has been hopelessly addicted to over the last month.

To vote for your favourite multiplayer game for next months Net Game News, email your suggestion to ngr@pcpowerplay.next.com.au.

Quake 2 - 3.20

Half-Life - 1.0.0.8

Unreal - 2.20

Sin - 1.01

Shogo - 2.0

Starsiege Tribes - 1.2

Online Gaming Providers

Multiplay

(<http://www.multiplay.com.au>)

Although the bulk of the Multiplay web pages haven't been updated in quite a while, the folks behind the scenes have been hard at it preparing for a massive new update to their established online gaming service, Multiplay/Ten. While Multiplay Mark '99 has yet to be revealed, keep watching this space for an announcement...

This hasn't stopped one of Multiplay's strongest assets from keeping the multiplayer flame alight. The Multiplay Community has been as active as ever, putting the latest patches and game mods through their paces with fantastic results. ARC in particular has been a favourite amongst Multiplay subscribers during November.

The current hot issue on Multiplay is the resetting of player scores and tables, in favour of a fairer system. The argument is that those who have been long subscribers to

Essential Online Gaming Files

mIRC - <http://www.mirc.co.uk>

A robust IRC client with plenty of features designed to be dead easy to use. Plan multiplayer games from here, take part in the frequent developer chats held on IRC, or just catch up with your online pals.

ICQ - <http://www.icq.com>

The ever so handy message system that alerts you to the presence of your friends online, and allows you to send messages or chat to them. Really, you need this one.

Gamespy - <http://www.gamespy.com>

For a simple and easy way of finding and playing a multiplayer action game, Gamespy is essential. Games currently supported - Quake, Quake II, Half-Life, Shogo, Sin, Blood 2, Hexen II, Heretic II, Unreal, Turok II, Descent III demo, and Baldur's Gate.

Over 3,000,000 Users! Version 2.07 is out! Download it! Like Music? Check out MP3.com

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the service (who may not necessarily be currently active) "camp" at the top of these tables, making it hard for current active players to get some recognition. A newer system planned should allow for a more accurate display of who's fragging who on Multiplay. Visit <http://www.multiplay.com.au/cgi-bin/ubb/cgi/Ultimate.cgi> for some interesting reading, or to have your say.

Top frag scorers on Multiplay in February

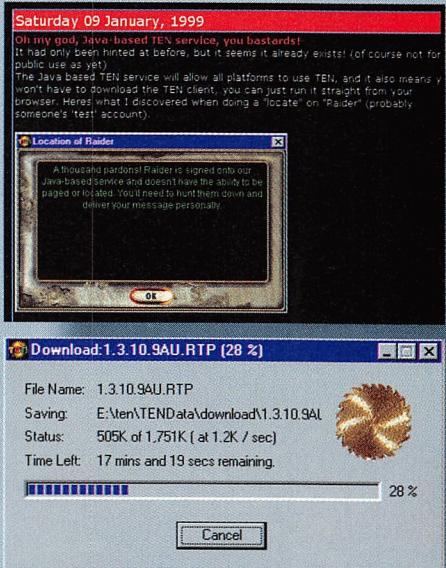
1. **Londong:2222**
2. **Althor:2146**
3. **MagnaDeth:2076**
4. **POPnFRESH:2052**
5. **MG-Halo1:2040**
6. **Monk:2024**
7. **LUCKEY:2010**
8. **SlaiN::1956**
9. **Halo1:1938**
10. **Romulan:1936**

Wireplay

(<http://www.wireplay.com.au>)

The Wireplay Quake 2 Warp competition is under way, with the opportunity still open for new players to join up. The catch: Quake 2 Warp is a cable only competition, for ridiculously low ping level death matching. At this stage some players haven't shown for their match-up, so visit <http://www.wireplay.com.au/comps/warpq2/news.shtml> for more details. Win the challenge and walk away with the deep satisfaction of being the Frag King or Queen, as well as a yet-to-be announced prize pack!

The game that's most getting a work out here at NGN is Starsiege Tribes. The only problem has been the lack of stable



and lag-friendly servers available to play on. Wireplay have come to the rescue! While you can brave the general conditions of the 'net for a game, ST doesn't tolerate lag too well at all. Wireplay have recently added 2 Starsiege Tribes servers to let loose on. Ping times to these servers are drool worthy.

Wireplay are setting up a huge Total Annihilation league for fans of the RTS game, and are planning to include regular a round robin.

The Half Life server has been updated to version 1.0.0.8, which gives players more multiplayer maps, team play options, and less lag (resulting in faster, smoother play).

The most recent games to be given support on Wireplay include Starsiege Tribes, Half-Life, and Klingon Honour Guard.

Telstra SpringBoard™
the **FAST** internet guide

Wireplay
The games network

Wireplay Australia Home

In Other News...

Current Events

- Ancient Conquest
- Forsaken Frenzy
- Warp Quake 2
- Quake 2 - 2 on 2

Recent Events

- Wireplay Cable Competition Update
- Wireplay outage for Big Pond Servers this Sunday (7th February).
- Announcement for Total Annihilation Players
- Wireplay will run an Ancient Conquest demo competition.
- Forsaken Frenzy

Forums

- Forums
- Help and Support
- Action Games
- Strategy Games
- Others

Mods and TC's

Mods in development

Capture The Cow

Developer/s: Capture the Cow Team

Game Engine: Unreal

Available: 2nd Qtr '99

<http://www.planetunreal.com/moo/>

Capture the Cow is essentially a Capture The Flag mod where cows replace the traditional flags of enemy players. While Capture the Cow is a teamplay mod and features plenty of classes to choose from, at this stage in development these classes hardly reflect the subject matter of the entire game. The idea is pretty cool - the cows should move around, and moo in a rather cute way, but at this stage that's about it. Hopefully the developers will come up with a few new interesting ideas on top of this, but it could be quite a-moo-sing! Sorry...

Macross TC

Developer/s: Van Fanel (head developer)

Game Engine: Shogo

Available: 3rd Qtr '99

<http://www.planetshogo.com/macross/>

Based on the popular Macross series, the Macross TC is a highly ambitious one. While there will be no real single player levels released, the developers have designed levels much like single player ones to be played with and against other people. Macross TC will also feature your usual multiplayer staples, like Capture The Flag and what not.

A quick run down of the features:

- 16 new mecha from the legendary VF-1 Valkyrie to the deadly Regult Battle Pods
- Over 30 new weapons, everything from the GU-II Gunpod to Zentraedi Maggot Micro Missiles.

- Flying and space combat!

- Four new multiplayer game modes, including capture the flag, a territorial capture game, capture the macross, and objective driven missions.



HOTTEST TC/MOD OF THE MONTH

Karma

Developer/s: Dead Software

Game engine: Half-life

Available: 2nd Qtr 99

WWW: <http://www.contaminated.net/deadsoft>

Half-Life seems pretty much like a real-gun, real physics Quake 2 mod (looking at it from a very basic level). So what do you make of a Half-Life mod? Reverse it and make it more like Quake 2 again? Or a mod featuring loads of new super-destructive weapons with stunning visual effects? A new post-apocalyptic scenario to play around in?

No. Dead Software have been thinking a little differently. Think Amoeba. Life mod currently in development. Karma is all about the evolutionary ladder. There are currently 5 classes of players to play at, ranging (in advancement) from the Cellular Mass, Ichthyoid, Human, Exoskeleton and Devolver. The idea is simple. Everyone starts as a human, with 100 Karma points. Make a kill - you gain Karma points and your opponent loses Karma points. As points are gained or lost, your characters form changes. Here's a breakdown of classes and required Karma points:

- Cellular Mass 0 Karma points or less.
- Ichthyoid 1-99 Karma points.
- Human 100-199 Karma points.
- Exoskeleton 200-299 Karma points.
- Devolver 300 Karma points (maximum).

Each class has its strength and weaknesses, though generally, higher classes will perform better than the lower classes. To counter this, higher classes lose more Karma when killed while lower classes gain more Karma when making a killing.

The notion of Karma is definitely amusing. It has been designed with complete fun in mind. Although settings can be changed (like number of points gained/lost per kill), the idea behind a game of Karma is allowing for the frequent and rapid changing of player classes during a battle. Download this one as soon as it becomes available.

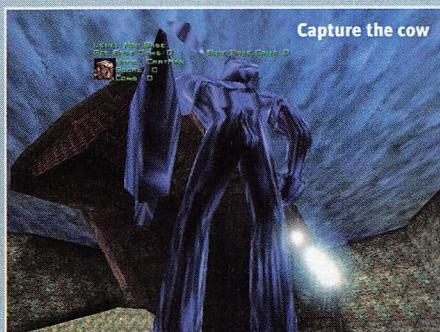


Karma
A Half-Life mod that lets you turn others into quivering primordial masses...

The mod is NOT out yet. The below is a preview of the help file. Have fun. Screenshots will eventually be released in the screenshots section under the menu, and small pictures of the characters will be placed below their names on this page.

Goal
The goal is to reduce all your opponents to primordial ooze while taunting them from the top of the evolutionary ladder. Karma points determine your evolution and devolution.

Karma Points
In the upper left corner of your screen is a number representing your Karma points, and a display indicating your character below it. If you die, you lose some. If you kill things, you gain some. You start as a Human. You can become an Ichthyoid, then an Exoskeleton, then a Devolver, so does your character type. You can eventually evolve into a creature that can obliterate the karma points of others, or you can slowly become a puddle of transparent glowing slime.



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PC-CDROM



CHAT



SEGA



ARCADE



NINTENDO 64

LETTERS

Write to PC PowerPlay
LETTERS
 78 Renwick St.
 REDFERN, NSW 2016
 letters@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

Are You S.C.U.M?

The feeling of opening up a new game after you have saved up enough money to purchase it is very satisfying. It is your way of saying thanks to the games developers for dedicating their time and money to make this type of entertainment possible for you. I had recently bought Half Life and savoured every minute I played of it, not to mention those memorable hours of playing online.

I have noticed that PCPP have included anti-game piracy ads in their recent issues, and are hoping to gain support in this matter. I believe game piracy is set to rise in the next decade. At the rate which games are being pirated the computer industry may become corrupt and cause a major blow in the entertainment business, causing loss of jobs, depression, (for developers and gamers) and the shattering of dreams for people who hope to one day enter into this industry. If you read bios or .plan files on the Internet; or any source you can get your hands on, you will see that developers are dedicating their time for something they love doing, for us, the gamers. No doubt 1998 proved to be a great year for games, with advancements in technology and the beginning of the online gaming era, but none of what I have said could have been possible without developers who have dedicated their time to making it possible for us to be entertained in the best possible way. I conclude by saying that next time the opportunity comes along, or the temptation is too high, think about who really is getting hurt by game piracy.

Goran Spoljaric.

Email

As with the Letter of the Month, there will always be dickheads. Being dickheads, they think they're cool. That these pirates call themselves 'Elite' is one huge joke to the rest of us - 'Elite'? Nothing could be further from the truth...

Tomorrow's good old days

I often find it amusing when people look back in retrospect (or

even hindsight) at the good ol' days of the Atari 2600 or the Commodore 64. I remember the first time I heard the phone ring in the coffee shop in Police Quest through the speaker on my new IBM-compatible Amstrad in 1988 with four colours and a huge 512k memory (so the advertisement went). I yelled out "Dad! Dad! Come listen to this!". In an almost ironic twist, 10 years later we're all playing another Sierra game, Half Life, that's starting to look a little dated compared to the upcoming Quake III: Arena which is looking awesome (and that's not a word I throw around loosely). In reality though we don't have to go back (or flashback) 10-15 years to be retrospective. We just have to look back 3-5 years at games such as Doom. Even games like Quake where hardware acceleration was an afterthought could be considered retro. Who ever wrote the Flashback on Railroad Tycoon described the early nighties as the "Golden Age". Are we then going to look back at this time ten years from now and describe this as the "2nd Golden Age"? What awaits us in the future? We can only guess.

Thrillhouse

Email

Play for real

I've recently had a bit of a think about that most excellent of game genres - the FPS. These games have come a long way since the early days when this type of game took us all by storm (all hail Wolfenstein). They allow us to immerse ourselves in truly unique environments where we battle for survival in situations so real that they continue to scare the willies out of me. Multiplayer now allows us to inflict these feelings of fear and excitement onto our friends in the ultimate survival-of-the-fittest situations. But I think there is a very important element missing from these games (especially deathmatch) that would enhance both the realism and the gaming experience. I give you... Fatigue! Yes, no longer will you be able to belt round that dungeon at a squillion miles an hour until you get bored or careless. Now you have to think about your well being, and I'm not just talking about health. Time your attacks. Find a place to lick your wounds after a particularly fero-



JOLT COLA LETTER OF THE MONTH
 A CASE OF THE GOOD STUFF FOR THE LETTER
 THAT SAYS IT BEST

Bloody idiots

Recently while playing Half Life (coolest game ever) on the net something very annoying, fruitless and generally BASTARDISH happened, some weak, annoying DICK HEAD, somehow hacked into his game and made it that you could not kill him. After a 15 min argument telling him to take the cheat off he said and I quote "maybe, some people find it fun to cheat". This got me pissed so I left. Now this was only once I hear people say, no, while playing Battlezone a few months earlier on the net the same crap happened. If you cheat in sport you are disqualified aren't you?

Bleech Daggar

Email

Yes indeed, they should be hung, drawn and quartered. The great Diablo on Battle.net was good for about 3 weeks before the hackers completely destroyed the fun by giving themselves powers which made them effectively invulnerable. All we can hope for is that the game developers somehow make their games 'hacker proof'. They are trying, but sadly, in life and games, there will always be dickheads.

cious battle. It affects your aim, your judgement, your ability to run away... Aah, now we're talking. Just imagine it. You have just escaped the biggest battle of your life, you're low on health and you can hardly lift your weapon. You stumble around (slowly) looking for a place to rest. Suddenly a big-arse marine jumps out from around a corner. You fire a couple of rounds but they go wide... you couldn't hit the side of a barn right now. You turn to run but you're hurting... he's coming... shots fly over your head... you take one in the shoulder... you trip and fall... he's right there! Quickly pull out the shotgun... turn around and blast him at point blank range. Head shot... threat ended. You struggle to your feet. Now you've really gotta find a place to hide. Maybe play sniper for a while? I think I made my point.

Chris Radvan

Email

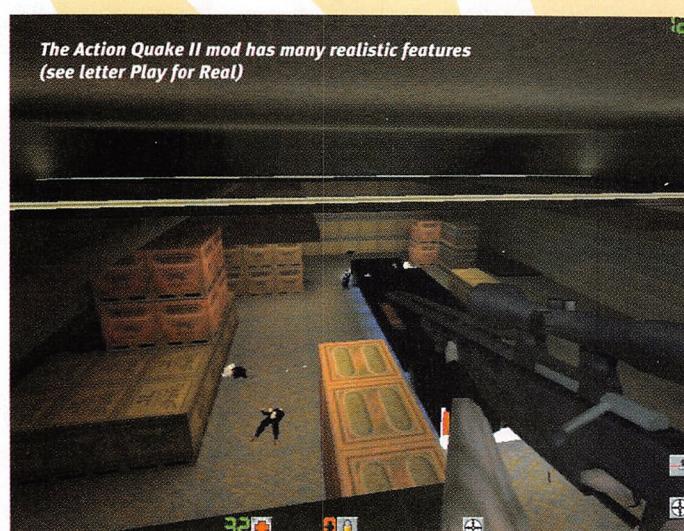
Many game designers (notably id's John Carmack) intentionally ignore

these aspects of reality in their game design. Instead they try and come up with a good game, as opposed to a faithful duplication of reality. Still, we know that the id lads read PCPP, so if your idea shows up in a future game, we'd expect that PCPP #35 will be Exhibit A.

For the games

In one of your issues of PC PowerPlay, you were describing what you call "The Ultimate Gamer". In your point of view, you've really got to have no less than a PII, 3Dfx card, the mother of all hard drives, 21 inch monitor, theatre sound, a joystick for every occasion and a hell of a lot of games. Well, from my point of view, you are very wrong, I am sorry to say. The fact of the matter is that there is no thing as the Ultimate Gamer, and I doubt there ever will be. When I was introduced to computer games by my father, I used to play the old

The Action Quake II mod has many realistic features (see letter Play for Real)



*The eye-candy that is Starcraft.
(see letter Gotygate)*



Coleco-vision. This was similar to the Atari at the time. The point is that I enjoyed the Coleco-vision, as much as I enjoyed playing Starcraft or Blood II or even Tomb Raider for that matter. Then I slowly upgraded, from the NES (Nintendo Entertainment System), to the Sega Master System, to a Master System II, 2 Gameboys, SNES (Super Nintendo Entertainment System), an Apple II, Apple II GS, a Pentium 75, then an MMX 200, to the system that I have now, a Pentium 166MMX, 4.0 GB hard drive, Viper 2000 video card, a PC Trident Pad, and a 12MB Voodoo II 3DFX card, with a 32X CD ROM. Now, with all of this, the thing that makes me a Gamer, is not the hard drive, not the 3Dfx card, but it is my love of just playing the games that makes me a gamer. People that call themselves 'Ultimate Gamers' or 'Hardcore gamers', are just people that think that they need all the latest equipment, and 'Hardcore' utilities to play the games, but that is where you are wrong. What makes a gamer a TRUE gamer, is just to have the love for playing the games, and are willing to try any new game that comes along. BEFORE they criticise it. There is nothing worse than making fun of a game without playing it, at least, for a good half hour.

Remember, from the Sega Master System, through to the Nintendo 64, and to the wonders of 3Dfx, there are still games that you just can't beat the feel of, and chances are, that you never will. Long live the Gamers!

Christopher Johnson

Email

Damn straight. Many of today's great games need a mother of a system to run, but owning a beast of a PC does not automatically make one a hardcore gamer.

Topical

Topic 1: I am turning 14 in two weeks time and I consider myself a gamer. But then there are people out there who think we are a bunch of losers. Maybe some are losers and smart asses but that doesn't mean ALL of us! I've loved games or computers for that matter ever since I was 7. Now I am a devoted gamer and sit in front of the computer all weekend just playing games because I love 'em.

Just because we are young doesn't mean we are a bunch of losers.

Topic 2: With myself loving games so much, I have to get all games that I lay my eyes on, but of course I have a money problem. So what do I do? I look for full install patches, cracks, registration code etc, etc. You'd probably call me a pirate. I also do this because I can then save up for those Voodoo 2's and Pentium 2's. If I was legally able to work I'd have 'The Beast'.

Dane McColl
New Zealand

*Topic 1. You are a True Gamer.
Topic 2. You are a pirate. Not being able to afford something does not give you the right to steal it.*

Gotygate

Even before I saw the results of the GOTY awards, I already felt that some people would vote for Starcraft in everything possible for no reason. And I'm right, some of the results in the GOTY are impossible. Best Graphics was won by Unreal, I agree with that, but Starcraft even getting in? No way! Starcraft's graphics are virtually just jazzed up Warcraft II graphics! And SC beat Quake II in graphics? I don't think that's possible. SC simply has 2D flat graphics, while Quake II has 3D polygon graphics. Overall Game of the Year, the only reason that SC won in anything is just because it's a new game. Imagine if Quake II, Unreal, TA and SC came out at the same time! SC's ass would be kicked big time. SC is a lame upgrade of Warcraft, with the same stupidity of the AI.

Now to the multiplayer and online area, SC got a place again, I've got SC, a 56k modem and Battle.net, I tried several times trying to log onto Battle.net, and I waited and waited, then I went and played some other game. Battle.net is slow and it sucks. I only ever got onto it once. Great, Best Intro, Starcraft again. What good is it? It just shows Terrans and something that blew them up, doesn't show the story at all. Sound Fx? Starcraft got second, SC's sound fx: beep, bang, bang, bang, slurp, pop, boom. I'll simply say this: Everyone just votes for Starcraft in everything for no reason just because it is new. This is my opinion, agree with it, hate it, your call. And yes, I have played Unreal, TA, Quake 2 and SC.

Pyro
Internet

True, we too were a little disappointed to see Starcraft pick up some categories which it in no way deserved. Our theory is that people just love it so much that they got a little overenthusiastic with the voting. Unfortunately your key points fall a little flat: Starcraft is a new game, but so were every single one of the other games in the voting list, and criticising Starcraft's multiplayer after stating that you'd never tried that aspect of the game doesn't help your case. Those minor technicalities aside, we're with you 50%!

Quaking the foundations

I recently unearthed a shareware CD with thousands of games (or so it claims) from the early 1990's

and earlier. After installing Commander Keen - Attack Of The Vorticons for the nostalgia value (I am probably the only person my age in my district who regularly played the C64 as well) when an item in the menu caught my eye. It was entitled "About id Software". Interested in finding the changes in their goals since this game I read it. It said at one point "ID Software is here to bring full version commercial quality software to the market at shareware prices". Hmm... Correct me if I'm wrong, but has that philosophy changed just the tiniest bit over the span of a few years? Outside games made by the Apogee division of the company, Doom II was the last to stand by this pledge made by the founders in the origins of modern gaming.

Richard Green
Newcastle

You go from an enthusiastic garage-programmer to one of the richest and most powerful organisations in the world and see if it changes your attitudes! Still, id's early ways did leave us with a mighty legacy: the demo.

Games unlimited

Games have almost reached their limits. Don't get me wrong here, gaming will probably go on for ages from now, but in about ten years or so the graphics, sound, game play etc, won't be able to get any better. Even nowadays games aren't getting much better, you walk around with flash guns and shoot things or race round in an expensive car and try to come first, I could go on with

the other categories but you get my point. You can say that certain things are better in the game but the point of the game is still basically the same. Even in the old classics like Space Invaders you just move around and shoot at aliens. The only way games will be able to get any better will be with virtual reality, but at the moment that's almost as slow as a snail pulling a boulder. What do you think will happen to gaming in the future? Personally I don't care if the games stop getting better as long they're still good fun to play.

Dane Mcoll

Email

I'm sure that if you looked back over letters to game mags ten years ago you would find similar letters. As you point out, the only certainty in games is that the alien invaders never seem to learn their lesson...

Painless gaming

I am writing in response to a letter in your January '99 issue, entitled "The bad bits" from a Harley McGann. He asks why Half Life did not get 100%. Well, in my experience of Half Life, I'd have to agree that it is almost perfect, but there is one little niggle that seems to be fairly apparent to me. Has anyone else noticed that your friend and mine, techno-nerd-in-power-armour Gordon Freeman never screams/grunts/howls/gasps when he takes damage? Does this guy have an extreme pain threshold or what? Maybe he is mute. My point is that, although it is probably not too important, I for one like a little verbal backup to the on-screen action. A little flashing icon near the extremity of my screen just doesn't have the same effect on me as the Quake 2 guy going "ARRRGH!!!". BTW, I run Half Life on a fairly poor system, in the lowest resolution in software mode, and it runs great (no noticeable difference to Quake 2), plays brilliantly, and even looks pretty damn good, with hardly any 'chunkification' of the pixels and all those funky lighting effects. I think that fact alone should count for a lot in the face of games like Unreal. You know the ones, 3D card required etc. Kudos to Valve for creating such an awesome gaming experience!

Brendon Pardy

Email

That console thing again

Y'know, I am kinda getting sick of the usual Console vs. PC argument. And you can sure as hell bet that half of Australia is getting annoyed as well. I mean, come on, we all know the usual comments, on one side is the console punk, and he says "Yeah well you can move 'em around easy then hook it up to your friend's big screen TV and they have these mad controllers too!". That's a good point. But on the other side of the ring we have the computer nerd, he points out "The PC is only slightly harder to move because of the cables and the monitor. But it has multiplayer capabilities that exceed the consoles by far, such as a 32 player frag fest on Quake or hundreds of people battling it out in WWII fighter planes in European Air War. And the mouse and keyboard are far easier to use than an ergonomic game pads". That's another good point.

The only problem with this is that it will keep going forever, unless someone does something about it. So I've taken matters into my own hands. You console punks can keep your game pads which have 21 programmable buttons and a joystick for your thumb, your sad ability to play only 4 player frag fests on Goldeneye, the marginally cheaper games and being able to see it on a big screen TV. And us computer nerds will keep our easy to use mice and keyboards, damn fast processors, absolutely drop dead gorgeous graphics and one big mother of a god 21 inch flatscreen monitor. There now, that was easy wasn't it?

Snookle

Email

My opinion

OK, I just love Action Games such as Quake, Tomb Raider, Duke Nukem 3D and Fade to Black. And Adventure games such as Twinsten's Odyssey, Sam and Max and Discworld. I don't know why I like Adventure games but I just do. All the other games are pathetic. I mean, let's say you are playing a pinball game and get a couple of points or run down a dark corridor and find yourself face to face with a friend in a game of Quake, or get a hole in one in a game of golf or be ambushed by

Pig Cops. What I'm trying to say is the other games aren't exciting. I mean if you

think scoring a goal in Actua Soccer is exciting: go see a psychiatrist! And Adventure games are hilarious, Sam & Max do hilarious things and Toonstruck with Drew Blanc and Flux Wildly, as Flux would say "It's a kick up the old wazoo". Does Sim City have funny parts? Nope. Flight Sim '98: no hilarious parts. I bet that if there was an Australian vote Action and Adventure would be on top by hundreds. Well to tell you the truth there is a game that makes me laugh that is not in Adventure that is Tetris.

What I laugh at is how pathetic the game is. I mean, putting blocks in lines. Hey that's '50s material, the 1850s that is. So one question: Why do they make pathetic games? So to all those people that like other type of games: go get help!

Benjamin Clarke

Tasmania

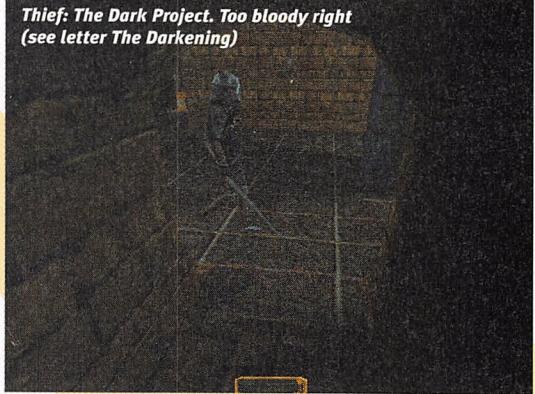
"Hilarious parts" are by no means essential for anything. That said, your letter has many hilarious parts - but probably not the bits you think...

The darkening

What's got into everybody? Why has every damn game got to be so damn dark & black? Fair enough, black tee shirts, I could hack them. But PC games seem to be getting darker and darker. It was OK if you have the option of being able to lighten them up by pushing the F11 key, but the latest ones such as Monster Truck Madness don't even have this. I won't be buying it. Maybe it's a deliberate ploy on the part of game constructors to hide all their daggy graphics. As far as I'm concerned, any game whose demo I come across which is dark, and any badly coloured web pages of similar dullness get the big. We humans haven't got cat's eyes. So why is it that so many of you stupid computer gaming wankers and web page author wankers think we have? It is quite beyond my comprehension.

I have trouble enough with a screen dot pitch of 0.25mm, so how those with a larger dot pitch

Thief: The Dark Project. Too bloody right (see letter The Darkening)



get on can only be worse? I'm just hoping that this silly darkness craze doesn't continue on for too much longer. C'mon let's get some light and sunshine into our enjoyment like we do at the beach, or out snowskiing.

Yours Sincerely,

Phillip Truscott

Email

Editor is completely lost for words and can't think of any reply. Sorry readers, it's up to you.

Stop picking on kids!

It seems that you have taken the view that anybody between 12 and 15 are immature in their actions when playing multiplayer. When I am playing Diablo I take the stance of a PKK (player killer killer) meaning that I only kill PKs. Now even though I am turning 14 this year my actions are working to make Battle.net a more enjoyable experience. This shows that not all younger players are immature. I realise that there are many immature younger players on the net, but that does not mean everybody between 12 and 15.

Also, after playing Delta Force at my cousin's for a while I began to notice that when I was playing the Indonesian campaign the enemies yelled out "ke kiri" during battles and "sakit" and "Ibu" when dying. This might not mean much to most people, but since I am learning Indonesian I understand what the words mean. Ke kiri is to the left, sakit is sore or sick (translation would be aarrghh!) and Ibu is Mum. I would like to congratulate Novalogic on this as it shows they have done their homework.

David Bass

Perth

We've never been of the belief that it's the younger multi-players that spoil the fun. As seems to be the theme in letters this month, dickheads come in all types and ages.

Outstanding observation re. Delta Force! We are all mighty impressed! Now, if someone would kindly translate the Zerg's speech for us we'd be even more impressed.

COMPETITIONS

HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC 3

The Heroes of Might and Magic series are among the top 5 games ever for just about the whole PCPP review crew. The distributors, Directsoft, are pleased it has finally been released - for the single reason being that our daily "is it in yet?" calls will finally cease. Peace and tranquility swept across the land... Top game, damn top game. Read the review so you know you need it. As usual, for reasons long lost in time, we have the regular 6 copies to give away. Here's the competition:

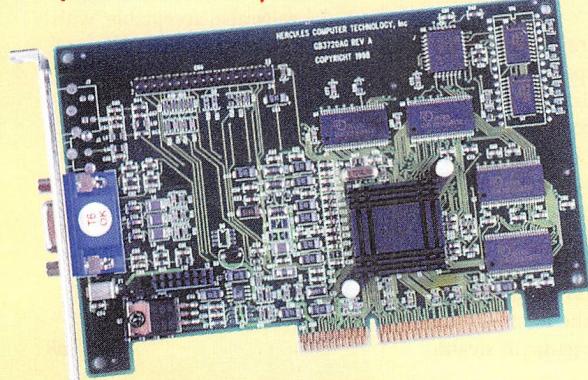
Q. How many knights of the round table were there?



HERCULES S3 SAVAGE GRAPHICS ACCELERATOR

New technology has a powerful effect on all of us. Witness the Hercules S3 Savage. We ran a competition for one in PCPP #33 and, to put it mildly, it went off. So, a quick and friendly call to our chums at PSI (Hercules distributors - 03 9878 8611) and we've another 3 of these all-new 3D accelerators to give away. Very good.

Q. Who was Hercules' father?



SIM CITY 3000

It is the city of sims - sim people and buildings, that is. Take one barren and useless wasteland, click, click, click, a bit, then behold the city of your dreams.

Magnetic gameplay, this, no doubt. The Sim City series is the original 'just 10 more minutes' game, but where you're usually still playing when the sun rises. Thanks solely to the pure heart of Sandy at Electronic Arts, we have ourselves a competition. 6 to win - what is it with this '6' thing?

Q. What is the full name of 'Mag-Lev' transport?



WHERE TO SEND

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope.

All entries close **May 13, 1998**

Entries to:
PC PowerPlay,
78 Renwick St
Redfern NSW 2016

Issue # 33 winners

CARMAGEDDON 2

Q. What is the former East German 'plastic car' called?
A: Trabant.

D Farr, Gooseberry Hill WA
A Ficarra, Chatswood NSW
M Nicolaidis, East Doncaster VIC
T John, East Keilor VIC
B Grasso, Noble Park VIC
J O'Regan, Innaloo WA

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

Q: How was Guy Fawkes executed?
A: Hung, drawn and quartered.
J Cheadle, Grange QLD
T Paine, East Keilor VIC
M Kinghorn, One Tree Hill SA
A Raper, Speers Point NSW
M Dummett, Macgregor ACT
N George, Newnham TAS

FALCON 4.0

Q: The F-16 was designed as part of the 'LWF' project. What does 'LWF' stand for?
A: 'Light Weight Fighter'.
C Karrys, Warren VIC
T Flamisch, Kurrajong Heights NSW
A Lovley, Kardinya WA
T Davidson, Randwick NSW
M Epis, Mt Lawley QLD
P Birnstihl, Elsternwick VIC

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

Publisher: Microprose

Developers: Sid Meier
with Arnold Hendrick

Year: 1988

Requirements: 286-12
MHz, 1Mb RAM, VGA,
1Mb HDD space

Long before Falcon 4.0. Even longer before Falcon 3.0, there was a ground breaking combat flight simulator called F19 Stealth Fighter. It should come as no surprise that F19SF, was developed by the creative genius at Microprose; namely Sid Meier and company. After the success of their first combat flight simulator; F15 Strike Eagle, Microprose created a master-

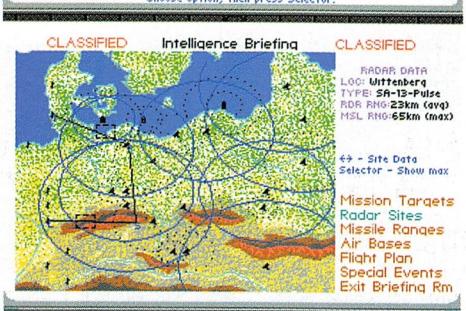
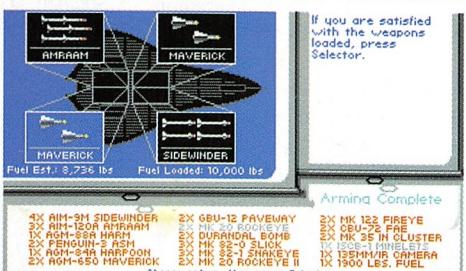
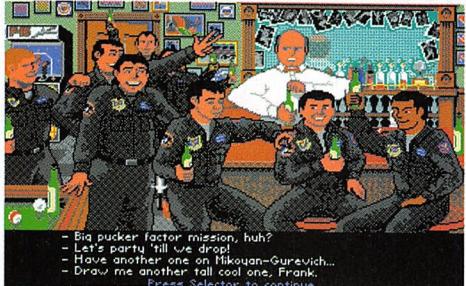
piece in F19SF, and it's little wonder that this publishing house both then and now stands among the leaders of flight simulation software.

The game itself was loosely based on the F117 stealth fighter, which at the time of the game's release hadn't yet been finished hence the mythical F19 name. Included with the game was a chunky training and keyboard overlay, both of which greatly assisted, making the learning curve manageable. Skill levels varied depending on the type of mission you chose. There were 4 war theatres, 3 war conditions, 4 mission styles, 4 opponent levels, and 3 landing models, that varied the amount of risk you took, and thus the amount of points you accumulated during your mission.

Day or night, on land or carrier, each mission had a primary and secondary objective, which netted the most points. Additional point could be earned along the way with a variety of air and ground targets such as AWACS, and SAM radar sites. This unique infinite mission generation system was considered a first in combat flight simulations, and greatly enhanced the replay value of the game.

The weaponry of the F19SF included 16 types of modern bombs and missiles, a camera or an extra fuel pod. Also fitted on the plane was a 20mm Vulcan cannon with 500 rounds. Pilots had to learn to master the gun as higher points were awarded for its use, and the limited payload of the plane was often exhausted quite early in the missions.

To play the game in stealth



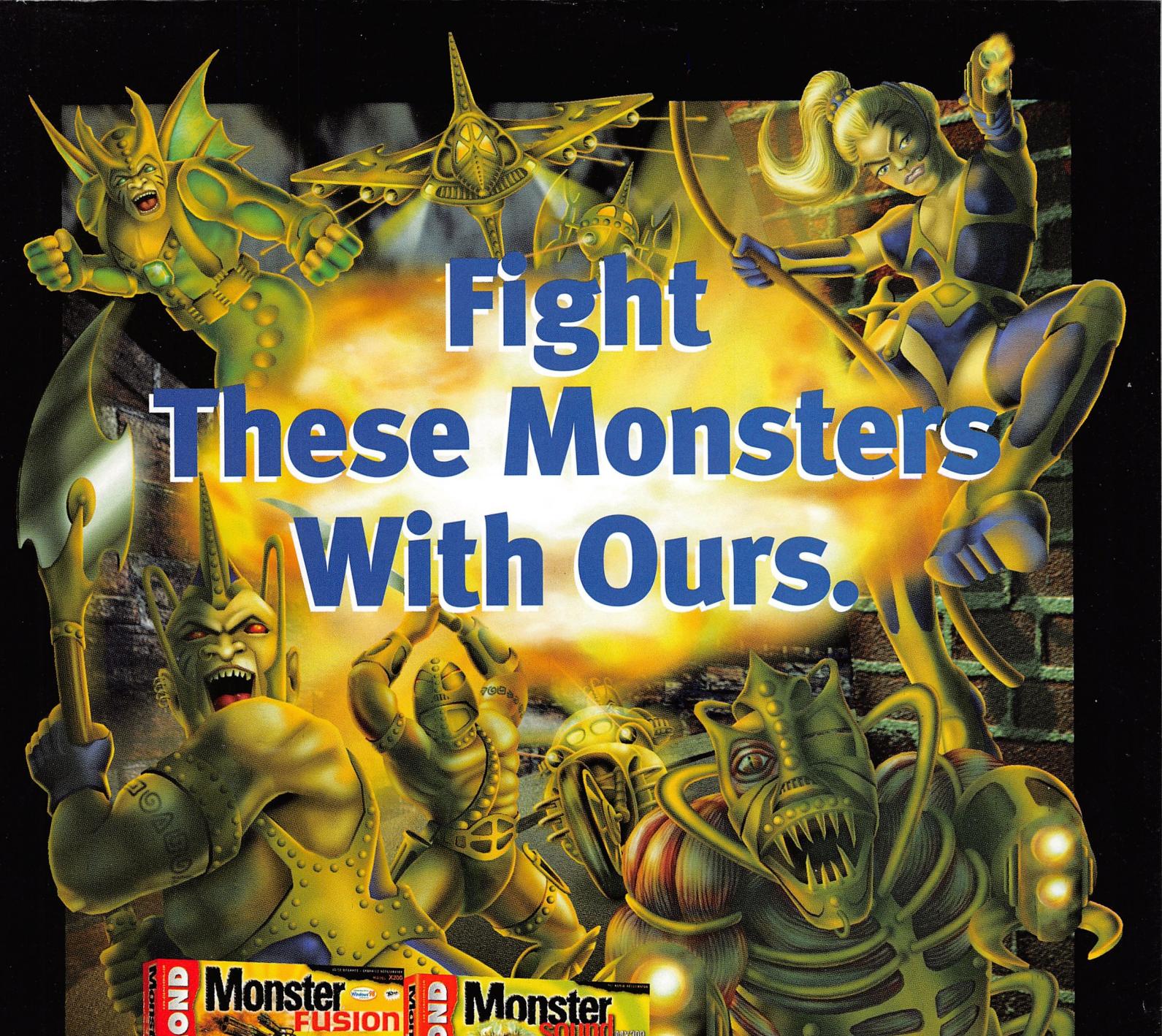
This was good enough to keep the hard-core simers happy while still being very playable for novices.

mode, you had to fly low and slow, thus avoiding radar detection. Some thought this approach more fun than actual dogfighting, however frontal assault was more often the preferred technique. Dogfighting was not particularly realistic, but a hell of a lot of fun, especially using the gun at close quarters. The flight physics and damage model were also acceptable, with sharp turns producing stalls and flat spins, and damage to the avionics resulting in the plane wobbling all over the shop. Pilot rank promotions and numerous medals were awarded for good mission results, which made you come back for more.

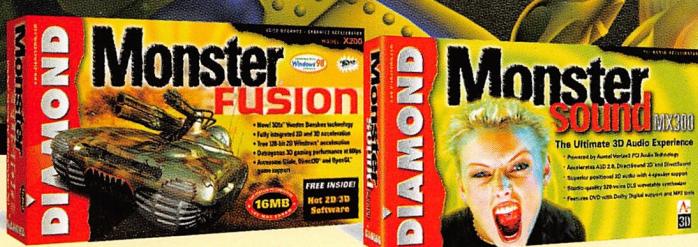
F19SF will forever be cherished one of the original flight simulators.

John Soh





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